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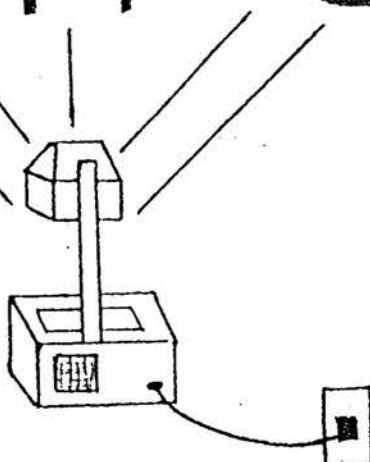
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TIPS

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Introduction

In this triple issue of TIPS, the major theme is "schooling," BOTH for children and teenagers, and in higher education. There is also an update on last year's Gulf Coast hurricanes, and some miscellaneous items. This will bring us up-to-date with the calendar for TIPS issues. As regular TIPS readers will have learned to expect, the coverage will be far from uplifting, though we do report good things when we can find them. However, the Training Institute's teachings--and, we hope, TIPS readers too--are concerned with truth, whether it be depressing or not, and it is only once one has confronted what is true that one is ready to decide how to act.

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Bulletin on the Establishment of the Citizen Advocacy Foundation of America

As most readers of TIPS probably know, Citizen Advocacy is an arrangement in which the paid staff of a Citizen Advocacy office recruits and matches independent unpaid volunteer citizens to advocate on a one-to-one basis for an impaired or disadvantaged person. Since Citizen Advocacy offices usually have only one or a few paid staff who do the recruiting, matching, follow-up, and record-keeping--the actual advocacy being done by the unpaid volunteer advocates--it costs very little to run such an office. Nonetheless, Citizen Advocacy programs have historically had difficulty getting and keeping funding that is free from conflict of interest. Obviously if a Citizen Advocacy office is funded by some party that the advocates it recruits will advocate against, then that party is apt to withdraw its funding. Thus, there have been very few funders that are suitable to fund a Citizen Advocacy program (since all human service funders might theoretically be the object of some advocacy), and most Citizen Advocacy offices have ended up relying on multiple funding sources, as well as fund-raising; and even so, many offices have gone under from a funding collapse. This has been all the more sad since Citizen Advocacy programs are so cost-effective, generating so much protection, mentoring, life improvement, and life-saving for the little money they cost.

The TIPS editor has long taught that one of the best funding sources for Citizen Advocacy would be some kind of endowment, trust fund, or similar no-strings-attached funding, but so far, Citizen Advocacy programs have not been able to secure much of such funding. Therefore, the TIPS editor has established a BRAND-NEW (as of early 2006) Citizen Advocacy Foundation of America (CAFA), whose sole purpose is to solicit donations for an income-producing fund (like an endowment), and disburse grants from it to Citizen Advocacy offices. Eligible programs would be those that are either struggling, and need some money to get them through a rough spot; and/or that need funding for specific purposes, such as sending people to training conferences. Eventually, the Foundation may also fund the establishment of new Citizen Advocacy offices. The Foundation is **not** envisioned (at least not at this point to provide permanent long-term funding to any project, but to give highest priority to “rescuing” offices that need financial rescuing. This announcement is to let

TIPS readers know that CAFA is now established, and has a bank account and US tax-exempt number (20-4134475). The CAFA board (composed of Wolf Wolfensberger, President; Adam Hildebrand, Vice President; and Susan Thomas, Secretary/Treasurer) is now distributing publicity materials and soliciting donations, and hopes to generate sufficient funds that it may really be able to make a difference on the Citizen Advocacy scene, and especially to those programs that are in financial distress.

Please consider making a contribution (tax-deductible for US citizens), and encouraging any monied people you know to do so as well. Our goal is an endowment of at least \$1 million. To obtain publicity materials about CAFA, grant application information and forms, etc., contact Susan Thomas, the CAFA Secretary, at 231 Miles Avenue, Syracuse, New York 13210, USA, or leave a message at 315/473-2978. However, don't plan on submitting grant applications until CAFA has some money to give.

The State of Our Schools

We remind readers what we have long stressed: that human services must by and large be expected to reflect their society, its values, and its trends, which is one reason why we devote so much TIPS coverage to societal developments and trends. E.g., if a society is based on good values, and upholds and teaches morality, this will be evident also in its human services--and vice versa. Thus, the (sad) state of our schools, as documented below, must not be segmented, but must be understood as one expression of where society is headed. Also, address of the problems of schools cannot be segmented (as it typically is), but must be part of the address of the larger problems of society.

Evidence of School Disfunctionality/Failure

Poor Skills & Performance in Math

*Children are no longer learning to memorize even **basic** addition, subtraction, and multiplication, because this is rote drudgery, but rely on calculators and computers to do it for them. Sometimes, there is still a rear guard rhetoric that calculators are not to be used until children have learned the basic operations by hand, but in practice, this seems to be less and less the case. This is catastrophic, because what calculators do is non-transparent, and thus children never develop a mental numeracy schema.

*According to traditional mathematics norms, only 5% of US high school graduates are prepared for college math. In fact, 23% cannot even add the cost of 3 items on a restaurant menu. Students perform below their traditional grade level in every state. The first President Bush brazenly claimed that the nation's math scores would be among the best in the world by the year 2000 (USN&WR, 17/6/91). That has not turned out true.

*One reason why there are so few young people entering the health professions is that they come out of high school without sufficient math and reading skills--not even enough for nursing school (SPS, 25/9/03). If this is not testimony to dumbing-down, what is?

*High school algebra texts have been judged to be of very poor quality (Time, 22/5/00). See also the next section, on science textbooks.

*Mathematics texts for elementary pupils now have such bizarrely modernistic titles as "The Mathematics Experience," rather than such traditional ones as "Arithmetic, Level Three." The language actually reflects the modernistic idea that one no longer has to (or should) work at learning, but "experience" it, and/or that all learning should be fun and easy. The whole education enterprise at all levels these days tries to convey the idea that nothing is really hard and takes effort.

Also, such textbooks these days are reviewed by literally scores of people--including a handful of "multicultural reviewers"--in order to make sure that they contain nothing that might conceivably offend even the most easily offendable people (CBS "60 Minutes," 14/2/93).

*As this is going to press, we learn that the US National Council of Teachers of Mathematics is ready to reject two decades of mindless constructivist curricular experimentation in math education

in elementary school, and go “back to basics,” such as multiplication and division, decimals, and simple geometric shapes. However, it shied away from calling for outright memorization. That will probably be another 10 years off (SPS, 13/9/2006).

Poor Knowledge of/Performance in Science

*With the American school system in a state of collapse, it is no longer capable of producing students in sufficient numbers who are able or willing to study the hard sciences. After all, in these fields, one cannot fake it, as one in effect can in many other fields. There are mechanical engineering departments at universities that have not turned out a single American PhD for years on end. The higher the degree, the smaller is the percentage of US graduates, with 50% of math and 50% of engineering PhDs in 1991 going to students from abroad, and the percentages are even yet higher in post-doctoral positions. The vast majority of these graduates end up staying in the US, and an increasing percentage of US science positions are being taken by people from abroad who went through a more rigorous schooling there and were able to perform competently. On the one hand, this prevents a shortage in the respective fields; but on the other hand, it also prevents a realistic feedback message being sent to the lower levels of education which, accordingly, are left to continue in their disastrous ways (multiple sources, 1992 through 2004).

*In part due to the PPP dynamics, and in larger part due to modernistic values (both covered extensively in earlier issues of TIPS), the US graduates fewer and fewer people with scientific degrees (e.g., in engineering), and more with degrees in PPP fields. In fact, more college students graduated in 2006 with a sports exercise degree than an electrical engineering degree. This took us by surprise. One commentator put it, “we’re...becoming a...society that specializes in consumption and leisure” (Newsweek, 12 June 2006).

*The textbooks used to teach science to children are full of errors both in photos and drawn illustrations, as well as in text. Publishers blame the states, which set standards for what must be taught in their respective states. But states complain they have to turn to overseas publishers to find useful texts. In one study, students who used physics textbooks in high school did worse in college physics than those who used no textbooks for their high school study of the subject (numerous sources, 2000-2004).

Poor Knowledge of History

*Even in some of the best American colleges, such as Harvard, Princeton, and Brown, students are amazingly ignorant about American history. They flunked history questions that in the 1940s might have been given to 8th graders to determine whether they were ready for high school, such as when the Civil War was. In fact, American college students now score worse on history tests than high school kids used to in the 1950s (SPS, 12 Feb. 2003). However, almost perfect scores were obtained on low-level questions about contemporary media entertainment (SHJ, 11 Aug. 2000). All of this probably reflects dumbing-down in school, a politically correct celebration of diversity culture, and an ever-lessened ability of American citizens to deal with their own civic institutions.

*Of course, the same ignorance prevails among high school students (numerous sources, 1994-2000). As one headline put it, “History is becoming history” (SPS, 28 July 2005).

American Ignorance About Geography

*29 million Americans cannot locate the US on a map of the world (CASA Cry, 1/2000).

*In 2002, only 58% of young Americans knew that the Taliban and al-Qaida were based in Afghanistan, and only 17% knew where Afghanistan was. In this respect, Americans scored only a hair above Mexicans. Obviously, this is yet another area where diversity education did not bear fruit, and shows how phony it is. However, such ignorance appears to be now normative in Western countries even among the educated (AP in SPS, 21/11/02).

*Even in 2005, 63% of Americans aged 18-24 could not locate Iraq on a world map, and 50% could not find New York State (Time, 15 May 2005).

Poor Literacy (Reading, Writing)

Some might say “Geography and history and algebra are not ‘relevant’ anyway, but at least students are learning to read and write, right?” Wrong.

*In the old-fashioned schools where teachers were often poorly trained and classes large, and there was no technology, entire classes of first-graders often were able to read at the end of the first year, and that made them feel very good. Nowadays, educators and shrink-types have turned everything upside down, and claimed that children must first feel good about themselves before they will learn to read, despite the fact that literally thousands of studies have failed to demonstrate that high self-esteem reliably causes **anything**, or at least anything desirable. In fact, the kind of self-esteem that the modernists value, which is really an idolatrous self-centeredness, is a bad trait that was once considered to be a vice, and in turn leads to all sorts of **other** bad things. (More on self-esteem later.)

*In the Syracuse public schools, 19% of 4th-graders showed “no evidence of proficiency at all in at least one language area and below norms in all areas,” but there are still many people, mostly of the liberal brand, who deny that our public schools are in a state of collapse (SHJ, 26/5/99). Overall, 70% of the city’s 4th-graders failed state academic standards in reading and writing. Amazingly, the state’s Educational Commissioner was euphoric about the results, having expected them to be much worse, and the newspapers called him “upbeat” about them (SHJ, 25/5/99).

*There are schools in New York City where only 5% of pupils can read at their grade level.

*American schools have denied for almost two generations that learning to read phonetically is extremely important, and as a result, children have not been able to read for decades. For instance, 60-70% of African-American and Hispanic children in New York City are illiterate, despite astronomic sums being spent on the schools. In response, more and more schools are introducing phonics elements. The problem is that some of the programs called “phonics” are not phonics programs and only capitalize upon the name in order to ride a little craze-wave. Nonetheless, one such phony phonics program was adopted by the New York City schools even though it has no evidence behind it. This is an excellent way for recalcitrant educators to give real phonics a bad name.

*Sometimes, a phonics program can teach a child to read in just a few days after the child had failed with years of “total language” or “whole language,” or what used to be called the sight reading or look-say method. This is, of course, concordant with what pedagogues have known for hundreds of years. There were adult natives in Fiji in the mid-1800s who, in a matter of hours, learned to read phonic written Fijian devised by missionaries through a phonics method. They would not have learned to read by the whole word method if they had studied all their lives. However, in America, reading methods are not selected on the basis of rationality or empirical evidence but on the basis of ideology, and there are profound ideological assumptions and cultures behind the whole-language method, going back at least two generations to the era of progressive education and all that it stood for, and that today is heavily allied with a PC mentality.

*We were astonished that one of our fellow professors at Syracuse University who specializes in reading and the language arts had not found a satisfactory text on how to build an effective literacy program in the schools until a book came out in 1999, entitled Language Policy in Schools. No wonder American children cannot read (CP, 10/02).

*We have encountered the most amazing legitimization for dumbing-down the education of children in the schools. Namely, some people have revised the definition of what literacy is by drastically reducing the criteria for literacy to the following: being able to recognize words from the primer-level, comprehend passages from a primer, write at least two letters or letter combinations from a “phonemic awareness dictation task,” and write at least two words containing two or more

letters each, spelled correctly, on a free-writing task. Obviously, the lower the competencies are that are defined as constituting literacy, the better the schools will look when the quality of their performance, and the performance of their pupils, are critically examined or tested.

*Here is another dramatic bit of evidence of the dumbing-down of US children. In 1950, the average 14-year-old US child had a vocabulary of 25,000 words, which by 1999 had shrunk to 10,000 (Time, 14/2/00, p. 25). This is somewhat counter-intuitive, insofar as one would have surmised that watching so much TV would at the very least enlarge children's vocabulary.

*One way in which language is being degraded is by "dumbing-down" written texts, as via simple words and short sentences, as has been done in/to elementary and secondary school textbooks.

*Once the schools decided to quit teaching anything of substance to pupils, researchers came along to "prove" that teaching pupils grammar produced no results anyway; and further, that how bad their grammar was would have no good or bad repercussions in real life (Time, 27/10/03).

*In some locales (e.g., California), so-called bilingual education ends up being zero-lingual education, in that the children end up being incompetent in both English **and** their native tongue (Time, 26/1/98).

*When the TIPS editor came to the US in 1950, almost all high schools required some foreign language courses to graduate. Now, only 14 states require it (Newsweek, 12 July 2006). If that is not dumbing-down, what is?

*A 2002 book on foreign language education in the US concluded that it is a waste of time to try to start to teach a foreign language to high school students. To begin with, that is terribly late in life to start learning any foreign language, and especially so if it is a **first** foreign language. Secondly, in a foreign language course, students in US high schools would be lucky to get 150 contact hours a year in such a class, especially because of "absences, fire drills, pep rallies, snow days, etc."--to which we would add, not to mention lock-downs (e.g., because of violence) and bomb scares. Thirdly, when the students then go on in the same language in college, courses usually recapitulate what was taught in high school, with not much additional benefit.

*About 75% of school children in the US are deficient in writing skills (SHJ, 28/9/99).

*Teaching children to write by hand has been neglected for so long that there are now more and more college students and adults who have never learned it, and if they **have** to write by hand, they can only print out block letters like children used to learn in kindergarten.

*One newspaper photo (SPS, 6 April 2006) shows a 12-year-old girl holding a pencil the way kindergartners would. This either means the girl is stupid, which one could not guess from her appearance, or that the schools failed to teach her the proper way to hold a pencil or pen for writing.

*Something peculiar is going on in the US educational system: 9-year-old children are twice as likely to read books as 17-year-olds, namely 86%, while by age 16, youths have declared it is more important to learn math and computer skills than to read. Paradoxically, even after learning computer skills, they may still not be able to write (AP in SHJ, 16/11/93).

*A character in the Mallard Fillmore cartoon (19/3/03) wondered whether people who referred to America as Amerika were making a political statement--or merely had gone to public schools. We have a small collection of such spelling errors from the newspapers, and even from university Schools of Education.

Grade Inflation & Social Promotion

However, one would hardly know that schools are failing to teach, and students failing to learn, from the grades that students get.

*Schools are reluctant to not promote children, even when they are failing, because “when a kid’s held back, the impact on his self-esteem is significant” (e.g., SHJ, 9 Feb. 1999). Not to mention that as many as half the students might have to be held back (e.g., Time, 13 Dec. 1999).

*There are sixth-graders in Syracuse who received scores of 100 in math and science, and 97 and 98 in language arts and social studies--but who failed the standardized test to qualify for advanced standing or an honors course. Obviously, this is due to outrageous grade inflation (SHJ, 2 Sept. 1997).

*Post-modernist grade inflation. Between 1968-2000, there was a 144% increase in high school students earning an A average (Newsweek, 19/3/01). Formerly, 17.6% of high school students had an A average, and now it is almost 43%.

*It is reported that grade inflation even swept across Harvard University, where more than 50% of the grades are As.

*Children are being so socialized to expect lavish praise and rewards for everything that evaluations of teachers will deduct points if they fail to praise sufficiently, and will give points when the teacher praises lavishly. Of course, a lot of children are well aware that all the praise and rewards are a fraud, and do not reflect whether they actually did a difficult job, or did it well (e.g., Newsweek, 10 Aug. 1998).

*Relatedly, games and contests in schools are now of the type where no one loses. Of course, this does not teach children about the real world, nor about being a good sport, a gracious loser or a generous winner--and again, the children are well aware that it is all a fraud (e.g., Newsweek, 19 March 2001).

*It used to be that students had a commencement ceremony when they graduated from high school. Now they graduate, and have graduation ceremonies, from pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, elementary school, etc., etc. Not only that, but they may receive “diplomas” just for having shown up, even if they did not learn anything (e.g., Time, 25 June 2001; Boston Globe, undated).

*One way many parents are dumbing down their children is by enrolling a child a year later than they have to (e.g., at age 7 instead of 6), so that their child will be one of the oldest in the class, and outshine other children (Newsweek, 11 Sept. 2006). This is a form of mind inflation.

Everyone Being Identified as “Disabled”

As fewer and fewer students seem to perform well in school, or to leave school with competencies, ever more of them are being identified as “disabled” in some way. This both excuses the schools and families of their responsibility for this poor performance, and also entitles the schools to receive more government funds designated for special education of the handicapped.

*One way for the schools to salvage their image is to simply shunt children who do not learn to read into special education classes, which of course puts the onus of incompetence upon the children. Some people believe that one reason why many schools prefer failing children is because then, as we said, more money gets funneled into the school system (SPS, 8 Feb. 03).

*Apparently, parents of children who have a perfect grade A average in high school will nonetheless seek to have their children classified as special education students so that they would become entitled to extra time on standardized tests (Time, 14/11/05). Then they are surprised when their children start lying and cheating and perhaps committing crimes.

*According to a 1996 study, schools are increasingly likely to classify mentally retarded pupils as having “learning disabilities.” One consequence has been that the average IQ of the “learning disabled” school population, particularly in urban schools, has declined.

*In the Baltimore school system, 17% of all children were in special education programs, which were classified into five "intensity" levels, levels IV & V being mostly segregated and including many children. One advocate for the handicapped said about the special education programs of the city that "you could give these people \$500 million, and they would piss it away"--which is almost certainly true. One lawyer appointed by the courts to monitor the city's special education program (at a rate of \$125 an hour) charged a total of \$20,000 for a single month of the year alone, not to mention the costs for her support staff (Time, 27/10/97).

*In the New York City public school system, one in every eight children is classified as handicapped (more than double the number 12 years earlier), and three-quarters of these are classified as either learning disabled or emotionally disturbed. The special education budget in NYC consumes a quarter of the entire school system's budget. There are reports that many non-handicapped children get classified as learning disabled only so they can get into a class where there are smaller groupings and other advantages. While drastic cut-backs are being made in regular grades because of budget crunches, special education is protected by all sorts of court and federal mandates. Among other absurdities, this is also an example of the increasing federalization that we see in numerous domains of American society. This exchanges here-and-now disfunctionalities for yet bigger later disfunctionalities (SHJ, 30/4/91).

*People in special ed and similar fields constantly demand "sensitivity" **from** the public, but unless they develop a little sensitivity **to** the public, special education will end up with a very severe bruising somewhere along the line. Here is an example of the kinds of things that citizens--particularly when in a continued long-term financial squeeze--will not consider either fair or right.

The number of children in New York City special ed grew from 30,000 in 1974 to 135,000 in 1994, even though the city population shrunk during this period. Of course, the vast majority (60%) of such children get labeled as having "learning disabilities," which is really a catch-all, and a way of dumping any child that anyone wants dumped, who has incompetent parents, etc. Also, 85% of children who got "referred" for "evaluation" for special ed placement ended up in it, and only 5% of all special ed children ever got back into regular ed. There are even separate special ed schools, and these are among the most violent in the system. All this probably accounted in part for the extremely high drop-out rate of special ed students, which was about 66%.

Special educators are assisted by so-called para-professionals, many of whom are unemployable on the open job market. Many teachers are outright afraid of these aides because they are "mean and aggressive," and do much as they please without any consequences. Many parents are delighted to get their children into special education because then the family receives \$500 a month in what many of them call "crazy money." Private service providers also profit lavishly from services that the school system buys from them.

The average cost of educating a child in NYC in 1994 was \$8,000, but only \$5,150 was spent per child in regular education, while \$10,200 was spent on each child who received part-time special education, and \$24,000 was spent on each child in full-time special education. The cost increases have been not only in absolute dollars but also in percentage of the overall education budget, up to 20% in 1994.

Despite these expenditures, neither the regular ed nor special ed type of child was really getting much--despite the fact, and in part because of the fact, that the special education program has been under court supervision for 17 years. Many lawyers have been getting huge salaries monitoring the whole mess (and have an intense interest in keeping it a mess), and vast sums have been spent on evaluation and placement of children rather than teaching them. If a child comes along who is not doing well and speaks only Urdu, the city is legally obligated (thanks to the politically correct and the courts) to provide a psychological and educational evaluation in Urdu, and when the child is placed into special education, a full-time para-professional who can speak the child's language gets assigned to that child, and there are 2,400 such positions filled. Amazingly, some children from homes in which parents speak another language must get evaluated in that language even though the **children** speak only English--and then get put into special education because they failed the test in the foreign tongue. Almost everybody interviewed seemed to agree that the entire city school system revolved primarily around employment of teachers, administrators, evaluators, lawyers, etc., rather than around getting kids educated. And then there are all the other militant special interest groups concerned with poverty, ethnicity, language (remember the ebonics debate?), the teachers' unions, etc. Critics have called the entire system everything from "extra-terrestrial" to "kafkaesque"--and the above are only

some of the absurdities of the entire system (City Journal, Summer 1996; source item from Howard Blackman).

*A medical student at Tufts University kept failing course after course, sometimes even after taking them more than once. According to experts, he suffered from “numerous severe language and learning disabilities”--though he was said to have otherwise “normal intelligence.” After he had flunked some of his courses for the third time, the University threw him out--whereupon he predictably sued (APA Monitor, 8/90). We have a very simple solution to this problem: let him pass through medical school, and thereafter, permit him to practice only on lawyers. In at least one US state, the only physician who will participate in executions of criminals is “dyslexic.”

Teacher Quality & Qualifications

Obviously, there will be at least some correlation between the qualities of teachers, and the achievement of their students. What matters is teacher competence, knowledge of subject matter, and skill at managing a classroom--but these may not be assessed by what gets promoted these days as good measures of teacher quality, such as state certification, or having taken so many “how to teach” courses. Half the math and science teachers in California had no background in the area they taught. And in Massachusetts, 59% of applicants for teaching positions failed the exam, while in one affluent county in New York, 75% of them failed (Time, 20 July 1998).

*Colleges of education are no longer preparing students to teach, but are instead preparing them to be ideologues, and of course, ideologues of political correctness. For instance, both Brooklyn College (in the liberal US northeast) and the University of Alabama (in the more conservative US south) claim to prepare their students to combat institutionalized racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism and homophobia. Students at these institutions of higher learning (!) can be flunked and not permitted to graduate, not for poor work or failure to pass exams, but for holding opinions that their professors judge to be racist, sexist, homophobic, etc. Further, they emphasize building “educational communities” and “alliances” that emphasize group projects which deny any “elite hierarchy of knowledge, possessed by some but not all” and therefore deny teachers any superior role in the classroom (multiple 2006 sources).

*Elementary school math teachers in China only have the equivalent of a high school diploma, but a comparison of them with a sample of American teachers--most of whom either had or were working on a Master's degree--revealed that the Chinese teachers had a vastly superior understanding of mathematics. In fact, the American teachers were severely deficient even on very fundamental mathematical processes (Review in American Scientist, 1/2000).

*The superintendent of a Los Angeles school district had a striking insight: testing pupils for achievement was not going to work if the teachers were not capable of teaching. In consequence, he hired 850 “coaches” to teach teachers to teach. This is a terrible indictment either of teacher certification processes or teacher preparation programs, and probably of both.

*US educators use the phrase “dance of the lemons” to refer to the practice of shuffling incompetent or even dangerous school system employees from one assignment to another rather than firing them (Time, 15/9/97).

Graduation Rates

*Schools at all levels (elementary, secondary, and college) and entire school systems are also falsely reporting their graduation rates, apparently in order to make themselves look better, and not to be placed on school “watch lists” or to merit similar negative attention.

The US national true average graduation rate from high school is approximately 70%, but many schools falsely report rates as much as 20 or more percentage points higher. Some schools report their rate as being at the average, but their real rate may be as much as 20 points lower.

The percentage of US students who drop out of high school before graduation has been increasing, and is now up to about 30% (Time, 17 April 2006). One of the big contributors to this phenomenon was the abolishment, starting in the 1970s, of vocational and technical high schools and

programs, supposedly in order to reduce social stratification, and give all children the opportunity to pursue academic education and go to college. Like so many social engineering schemes, this one too backfired, and now most of the drop-outs are people who were not strong academically but could have learned a trade in high school; and at the same time, industries are crying for people with technical skills--not to mention that people with such skills can obtain jobs with good security and that pay well, and could therefore give such students valued adult work roles. But as drop-outs, the roles they are likely to obtain will be minimally valued, marginal, or outright devalued.

*There is a high school in Brooklyn in which only 25% of the pupils met graduation requirements in 2001, and in another Brooklyn high school, not a single student met the state's standards for English in three years (SPS, 19/8/03).

*One sign of the collapse of US schools is that even though 94% of US 5-year olds were enrolled in kindergarten as of 2004, fewer are expected to graduate from high school than even a decade ago (Time, 2/04).

Schools Being Expected to Make Up for/Deal With the Collapses of Parenting & of Societal Functionality

One of the biggest effects of society on schools has been that as more and more social institutions collapse that used to conduct much child-rearing and otherwise provide for children, the schools have been expected to take over the things that are no longer being done by other social institutions because these are no longer functional, and most of all the family.

*It is absolutely no wonder that there is simply no time left to teach children, when the schools today are expected--by parents, and indeed by most of society--to do all the following for children: give them "diversity education;" teach them about sex; provide sex counseling and contraceptives; take care of their teeth, eyes, and hearing; feed them at least two meals each day; see that they are clean; clothe many of the children; take care at school of the children that these children bear and keep; occupy the children during the hours before and after school when their parents are not at home, and often on the weekends and holidays too; provide values and morality education (but without any values basis for any morality); take care of their behavior problems and violence; teach them violence prevention, and dispute mediation and resolution; counsel them on the topic of, and following any, violence and death; provide athletic development and every sport or recreation imaginable; keep the children at a healthy weight; attend to their health and medical conditions; take care of sick children during the day; supervise their mind drug regimens; and on and on. Colleges are demanded to take care of students' mental problems, and prevent suicides, accidental deaths from drinking, and drug use by students. Students who may never have had a course in American history may be exposed to extensive teaching about the Holocaust and its alleged lessons for multiculturalism, or about "body acceptance."

It all reminds one a bit of the old-time institutions that unsuccessfully tried to replicate the world in an artificial and dehumanized environment.

In addition, some schools have to teach waves of immigrants about societal norms and morés. No wonder there is no time left to learn reading, writing, and arithmetic!

The trend of US schools increasingly taking over parental functions has been very, very gradual over many decades, with very little explication that this is what the underlying policy was. Now at last, one educator has come out and said openly, "we can no longer bury our heads in the sand and insist our job is to 'teach,' not to parent" (CP, 2003).

*There are many reasons why schools might lengthen the school year in the US, but one of these seems to be a poor one, namely, to keep the children in school longer because their parents are not performing as parents, as documented by Time (31/7/00).

*Elementary schools in Norway have introduced a new subject that parents no longer teach: "politeness." Among other things, children are taught how to greet people and respond to greetings. Obviously, modernism is everywhere (AW, 21/10/95).

*One school teacher reported that for several years straight, the staff in her school commented on the fact that year by year, the incoming children were less able to work in a sustained and concentrated manner, and exhibited poorer self-control and less civility--all of which make teaching more difficult and are gradually converting the classroom from a teaching and learning environment to one in which behavioral problems and classroom management become primary issues (NCR, 17/2/02).

*We have discovered an astonishing new rationale for abolishing age-graded school classes and going to multi-aged school groupings. It is that younger children thereby acquire "older siblings," which they no longer get from their modernistic families that have only one or two children (Newsweek, 9 Dec. 1996).

*In 2001, there were at least 40 schools in the US specifically set aside for homeless children, many of whom had been homeless for years. Once such school alone had 400 such children. One reason why special schools are established for these children is that the public schools in some states refuse to enroll a child who has no fixed address. There are even special school buses that go around picking up only homeless children, presumably from shelters or motels where welfare has parked their families (CBS 60 Minutes, 4 Feb. 01).

*There are many reasons why parents pull their children out of the (free) public schools, and enroll them in private schools for which they have to pay tuition, or home-school them. One prominent reason is that the parents are concerned over what the schools are **not** teaching their children (reading, writing, and 'rithmetic), and what the schools **are** teaching their children: often sex, violence, bad language and other decadence. In San Francisco in February 2006, the local school board ordered that pro-homosexual posters be placed in every classroom at a high school; in Massachusetts, two state bills (backed by Planned Parenthood) were under consideration in February 2006 that would have taught children as young as 4 the "correct terminology" for sexual orientation (i.e., gay and lesbian), and "different types of families," among other things. And in Britain, one school would have offered pregnancy tests to girls as young as 11, without informing their parents.

*Let us not forget that even pre-teenagers--and even first graders--are now being taught all about sex in schools, as well as about so-called contraception and so-called "alternative lifestyles," especially homosexual marriage, and homosexual couples as parents.

*Among the innumerable non-academic subjects that schools are increasingly attending to instead of academic ones are anti-obesity programs. The least-worst aspect of this is that it might engage children in physical fitness and sports programs (Newsweek, 3 Feb. 03).

Then there are all the various competitive sports, and "ethnic" music and dances. Least-worst is that these may contribute to physical well-being--but children used to get exercise after school in neighborhood pick-up ball games, skating around the block with neighbor kids, skipping rope with their siblings, etc.

*Some US schools teach a 13-week violence prevention curriculum to their **elementary** school children. At one time, schools had fire drills, and in the 1950s and 1960s, nuclear bomb drills. Most recently, schools also instituted "gun invader" and sniper drills. What next? No wonder the children have no time to learn any academics.

*Some educational authorities are campaigning hard to have the teaching of "emotional intelligence" (commonly referred to as EI) built into the curricula of public schools so as to (allegedly) combat the increased violence among students and other behavioral problems (CP, 2003, No. 1).

As part of the teaching of EI, some schools are using workbooks entitled "Introducing Myself to Me," which to us sounds more like an education in self-centeredness than in social sensitivity. Also, the teaching of so-called self-esteem seems to be very much a part of EI.

Among the psycho-babble of this movement is that students are told to "hold on to and celebrate" their strengths, weaknesses, thoughts, and emotions.

Some critics have said that while public schools fail to imbue virtues, they instead imbue self-indulgence, self-pity, and phony self-esteem.

*At one time, schools informally set rules for student conduct, but in this litigious age, this is apparently no longer possible, and even the most minute such rules must now be **legislated**. For instance, New York State **passed a law** in 9/00 that students are not to wear hats or caps in class, are not to swear on school grounds, are not to run in school hallways, will not cheat or use profane language or vulgar gestures, and are not to bring weapons to school--not that even such laws help much.

*American school principals these days are expected to know children and child development, vast amounts of law, innumerable regulations, all sorts of technologies, statistics, accounting, business, public relations, safety issues, etc., etc. Some principals get wiped out by the sheer number of bomb threats that require them to spend night hours roaming the buildings with police officers looking for suspicious packages. As a result, many principals are quitting, some are cracking, and many get fired for falling short on one of the desiderata. Many of them are retiring early and some are gladly returning to teach at lower salaries (Pittsburgh Post Gazette, 3 Sept. 2000). Some principals have taken on the job of migrating from school to school to serve as emergency interim principals until a more permanent one can be found.

In essence, US federal policy forces local school districts to make promises that they cannot possibly keep.

*One reason why school costs have been rising dramatically is that schools have to (a) carry heavy liability insurance policies, and (b) hire ever more legal services. In fact, some school systems have entire legal departments or expensive contracts with law firms--sometimes several of them. In some years, such legal costs may increase by as much as 45%. This is happening even as school districts sometimes lay off other personnel to save money.

*One contributor to failure of the schools these days is, as they tell us, that teachers can no longer manage the "increased student diversity" in their classrooms (Time, 5 April 1999). Too bad this announcement was not made during "Celebrate Diversity Week."

Virtually every exclusive elite school these days in America feels obliged to make a claim of being "diverse and inclusive." For instance, schools charging \$20,000 a year feel that they earn this claim by admitting a few of the deserving poor on scholarships (FT, 12/98).

*It is fascinating to contemplate that at the same time that schools started talking about multiculturalism and diversity, they stopped teaching foreign languages without which other societies can hardly be understood.

Much so-called multicultural teaching is not even multicultural, but more like a puppet show which presents crude representations of other cultures and their costumes.

One interesting point about politically correct history is that it loses all interest unless one also knows the traditional history against which it pits itself. Also, politically correct history often becomes boring history, which is one of the reasons why young people lose interest in it; or it becomes interesting but lying history.

*New York State passed a law which, if it was taken seriously, would flood the state's school systems with defibrillators, one of which would have to be present at every extra-curricular activity, such as a second grade class taking a trip to a pumpkin farm.

*Things have gotten so bad in American schools that in the TIPS editor's opinion, nothing will salvage them short of an amendment to the constitution--or more likely an entirely new constitution--that would permit schools to do what the courts will no longer let them do at present. In other words, a big contributor to public school failure is all the court mandates they are now functioning under, which make it impossible for them to do what it takes to educate children. For instance, they are no longer allowed to take effective disciplinary measures against students, to get rid of incompetent staff, etc. Granted, a constitutional amendment may not fix the problem either, because much of school failure is also contributed to by societal decadence, and unless that changes, schools will continue to be very effective mechanisms for creating dysfunctional citizens.

*At least one commentator got it right when he said, "The schools are overwhelmed and aren't equipped for all that we're asking them to do. It's not the schools that have failed, it's the

community that's failed." As we have stressed in our teaching, schools cannot be expected to substitute for the collapse of families, community, and other social institutions that hold a society together and help to raise children--and when they are made to substitute, they fail not only at that, but also at educating children.

"Junk" Eating Up Educational Time

Since schools are expected to do so many things other than, and in addition to, educating students, it is no wonder that there is simply less time spent on what used to be called academics. In addition, with so many educational crazes in the air, much time is spent following these crazes and their dictates, instead of on actually teaching children, and doing it well.

*One way in which schools do an awful lot of life-wasting is by teaching little units on any number of things that may be of some interest but that really do not contribute significantly to the children's long-term competency--and these units are even taught in unconnected fragmented ways. For instance, there are schools that waste precious time teaching children a few score words in Swahili, which they will never hear in real life and never use; and on top of that, this is often taught to children who can hardly speak intelligible English. Instead, such children might often benefit from a smattering of Spanish, because they are likely to hear that spoken almost anywhere in the US, or at least they will meet people who know it or speak it at home.

*Elementary school children are being taught a month-long course on how to throw a dinner party (Time, 16 April 2001). Exactly how is this relevant for children who are not even 10 years old?

*As we keep saying, a parent these days can really not trust the schools (especially the public ones) anymore because one never knows what goes on there. As one cartoon put it, a mother asks her child, "What did you learn in school today that I'd object to?" There are books out that try to teach first-graders how to "make choices." We should also not be surprised that the children grow up without any achievement accomplishments if this is what the schools invest their time in.

*More and more, psycho-pop concepts are not only creeping into the curriculum of our schools, but are displacing "hard" subjects. A good example is a packaged navel-gazing program called PASSPORT that allegedly teaches pupils "emotional, social, cognitive and self-development" from grades 1 through 12.

*Character education in school these days can take the form of plastering huge slogans on classroom walls, such as "don't let your fear stand in the way of your dreams" (AP in SHJ, 20/4/00). One would think that educators would be ashamed of doing such things.

*A new trend is for various "victim groups" to lobby legislatures to make it mandatory that the schools teach children about the stories of their victimages. For instance, in New York State, there are now **laws** that mandate that schools teach about the Irish potato famine, slavery, the Underground Railroad, the Nazi Holocaust, etc. There are now also efforts to make it mandatory to teach the mistreatment of German-Americans, Italian-Americans, and Japanese-Americans in the US during the world wars. This would make a little more sense if students were taught any history at all, or at least knew any once they leave school, which seems less and less to be the case, as we have documented elsewhere in this issue.

*Students are no longer taught how to write well, nor about the classic literature of our culture, but high school English teachers are now having their students read such things as poems titled "The Pope's Penis" (this won a nomination for the National Book Award in poetry), and--excuse this language--"Who Gives a Good Flying Fuck?" (this by an award-winning professor of creative writing at Syracuse University), prose that describes oral sex acts, and so on (SHJ, 8 April 1993). Is it any wonder that parents, and others who pay school taxes, are up in arms?

*Considering how little the public schools are accomplishing, and how much pupils are dumbed-down, it is alarming to learn that on top of it all, much of the senior year of high school

students is wasted because so many seniors have few graduation requirements left to complete, and fail to take up the opportunities that they could.

Junking Kids' Time With Days, Weeks & Months Devoted to Special Topics

One of the ways that teaching and learning time gets junked is by schools marking or "celebrating" more and more special days, weeks, months, etc. This often involves class time and assemblies devoted to whatever is the topic of the moment, even though there may be nothing at all relevant to the students' education in how the special occasion is celebrated. With the exaltation of multiculturalism and diversity, more and more special days--ethnic festivals, religious feasts, etc.--are being added to the calendar, and it would be considered "insensitive" or offensive not to note them. There are so many special days, weeks and months to observe that it is no wonder that the schools no longer have time to teach the three Rs.

For the convenience of readers, we provide below a chronological list of the (so far) known special days, weeks, and months that contemporary schools, in the US at least, feel they must somehow note. There are additional dedicated days, weeks, and months, but we are only listing those that are or may be observed by and in schools.

*January. Martin Luther King Day is January 15, but he is actually celebrated all month long.

*February. For being the shortest month, it is extremely full. February is Black History Month, all month long (there is no German History Month, even though more Germans came to the US than Englishers or anyone else). And what a busy month it is! In Syracuse, there are up to 3 public events a day to mark black culture (not really black **history**), with hardly any days without events.

And we learned in 2003 that 7 February is National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day.

Early February is also when Korean New Year, or "Shin-Pa-Ram," is celebrated (SHJ, 9 February 1998).

And in the Nashua, NH, school district, one elementary school celebrates "perseverance" as its "theme of the month" (Newsweek, 7 February 2000).

*Whew! And now on to March:

March is Women's History Month. One columnist reminded us that March could be a good time for 4th graders to learn fun facts about Eleanor Roosevelt (Newsweek, 27 March 2000). A dead white males history month in between African-American History Month and Women's History Month would have been a welcome respite.

On 21 March is Hunger Awareness Day, but it is also National Single Parents Day, as designated by Congress in 1984.

The only good thing in all this is that one Syracuse high school has had an annual Wolf Day on 14 March (SPS, 14/3/92). Wolf Week comes later in the year.

*April: The poet said "April is the cruelest month," and finally, we know why.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month (in some areas also observed as Sexual Assault Awareness Month), and pity those poor children who will have to listen to a month of sex education because of it. In late April is Sexual Violence Awareness Week.

April is also National Stress Awareness Month, and Alcohol Awareness Month. We heroically do our part to remain aware of alcohol that month by imbibing as much of it as we can, but there is a limit to everything. (Often in April, we intensely look forward to Sex Awareness Month, whenever that is).

Holocaust Remembrance Week falls during April, as does Coke in Education Day, at least in Coca-Cola's headquarters state of Georgia (Time, 20/5/96; Newsweek, 6 April 1998).

Unfortunately, the celebrations of the major Christian and Jewish holy days--Easter and Passover--vary from year to year, but they are usually in late March to mid-April. Adding in the Hindu, Islamic, Buddhist, Sikh, and Baha'i holy days made April 1997 look as follows:

April 5-11: Holy Week, Western Christianity

April 5: Palm Sunday, Western Christianity

April 5: Ramanavami, Hindu

April 7: Eid-ul-Adha, Islam

April 9: Maundy Thursday, Western Christianity
 April 10: Good Friday, Western Christianity
 April 11-18: Pesach/Passover, Judaism (especially April 11, 12, 17 and 18)
 April 12: Easter, Western Christianity
 April 12: Palm Sunday, Eastern Christianity
 April 12-17: Holy Week, Eastern Christianity
 April 13-14: Saka (Theravada Buddhists) Buddhism
 April 13: Baisakhi, Hinduism/Sikhism
 April 16: Holy Thursday, Eastern Christianity
 April 17: Holy Friday, Eastern Christianity
 April 19: Pascha, Eastern Christianity
 April 21-May 2: Feast of Ridvan, Baha'i (SHJ, 13 Nov. 1997).

*May: In at least some communities, May 1 is "Diversity Day." (It should have been April 1.) Also in May is Depression Awareness Day.

*June: This month is typically filled with high school graduation celebrations. But do not overlook that June 10 has come to be observed in many localities all over the US as Jesus' Day, with people being called upon to perform good works. This could prove a menace to needy people who may be overrun on June 10, the same as many of the underprivileged get mobbed around Thanksgiving and Christmas.

And of course there is Flag Day on June 14.

Juneteenth (another "black" holiday) is now observed for about two weeks in the schools.

June was chosen as the Gay and Lesbian Pride Month. Why? Probably as a slap in the face to the tradition of June being the most popular month for weddings--at least in the US.

*In July and August, most schools (in North America) are closed, so the students are spared all the awarenesses of those 2 months.

*September: Usually soon after Labor Day (the first Monday after the first Sunday in September), the children return to school, just in time to celebrate September 15 through October 15 as Hispanic Heritage Month.

As of 2000, there is Pagan Awareness Day (on the autumn equinox, 22 Sept.).

September 25 is National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims, and the month closes out with National Deaf Awareness Week in late September.

*October is definitely not the month for children to learn the three Rs.

October is National AIDS Awareness Month, but one would probably not want to remind children in the schools of this.

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. That is a long suffering. But Rape Awareness Week in Syracuse is October 20-24.

Catholics and Catholic schools mark October as "Respect Life Month." Only once a year?

October also happens to be National Down's Syndrome Awareness Month, which many of us would not want to miss.

In early October is Fire Prevention Week, and pupils may be called out of class to an assembly for a presentation by someone from the fire department.

October 8 is Clergy Appreciation Day.

Starting around 1997, a week in mid-October began to be observed as "Week Without Violence Around the US."

One never knows what a high school science class will teach during "Diversity Week" in October--or for that matter, the English or history class. It may very well turn out to be some kind of gender war propaganda (Newsweek, 17/8/98).

Near the end of October, there is Wolf Awareness Week--one of the few such events of which we (and probably most children) approve.

*November is also quite busy. It is National Epilepsy Month, and if it were up to the Epilepsy Foundation, it would be a whole month of education of children and adolescents about epilepsy (Epilepsy Foundation 2002 calendar).

However, the month has too many other commitments to be devoted exclusively to epilepsy, viz.: International Creative Child and Adult Month, which could entail many of the “bring your parent to school”-type events
 International Drum Month
 Real Jewelry Month
 Nov. 2: Plan Your Epitaph Day
 Nov. 2-8: National Chemistry Week
 Nov. 21-27: National Farm-City Week
 Nov. 21: World Hello Day
 Nov. 23-29: National Game and Puzzle Week
 Nov. 27: Thanksgiving
 Nov. 28: You’re Welcome Giving Day (Time, 17/11/97).

The third week in November is National Geography Awareness Week. This often gets turned into a celebration of cultural diversity rather than a lesson in geography so that US children can learn to find the United States on a world map, which a surprisingly large proportion of American adults cannot do, as we noted earlier.

November 1 is National Family Literacy Day, and in late November is Story Telling Day (SHJ, 21/11/96).

*December: Are we worn out yet? It goes without saying that Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa are also celebrated--virtually all month long. And December 1 is World AIDS Day (and has been since 1988), which is widely observed with all sorts of activities.

*Finally, there are some events which either do not fit into the calendar so neatly, and/or for which we do not yet know the precise day, week, or month on which they are celebrated.

There are a “TV Turn-Off Week,” and an “International Buy Nothing Day,” but unfortunately we cannot tell you what the dates are, probably because the imperial powers are trying to keep it secret.

Blair’s Labor government in Britain has been the first British government to promote a “Sexual Awareness Week.” One commentator said that its message seems to be, “It’s really fun, kids, so don’t do it” (FT, 1/98).

Furthermore, we learned for the first time in 9/96 that some schools are staging “Diversity Days,” which is when “African-American, foreign students and special education students” are welcomed (SHJ, 4 Sept. 1996).

*A lot of people also have begun to celebrate the equinox (March and September) days **as well as** the solstices (June and December), which makes for four such celebrations a year.

Bullying

Even if there were no schools, there would still be (and always have been) bullies and bullying. Up until about 1710, the term “bully” carried positive connotations (e.g., “bully for you”), and even meant first-rate. However, it is now used mostly to refer to threats or mistreatment of a weaker party by a stronger one, and usually in connection with children.

*A number of recent studies concluded that despite years of self-esteem emphasis and similar craze programs in the schools, being bullied is a normative experience of American school children, as is being a bully oneself. In one study, 30% of students said that they had been bullied, and 82% said that they had been bullying. This seems to have started an entire anti-bullying cottage industry with anti-bullying lessons, psychologists giving battle, etc., etc.

*There are claims that bullying among children has become epidemic, probably because families spend less time together, and boys are developing fewer “outlets for productive communication.” An estimated 160,000 US children on any given school day miss school for fear of being picked on or bullied, which would be a phenomenal datum if it is true. Unfortunately, bullies themselves tend to have high self-esteem, but a large percentage nonetheless will end up with a criminal record by age 30. Also unfortunately, one school response is to apply entire curricula that

start tackling bullying as early as kindergarten, once again interfering with the teaching of academic subjects (Time, 21/8/00).

*A new phenomenon in schools in the US and UK is that bullies threaten their victims by telephone, voice mail, and telephone text messages. In the UK, about 25% of children had been thusly bullied by cell phone or over the Internet in 2002. Amazingly, such high-tech bullies are often middle- or upper-class kids, and mostly female. This is probably why they can afford to have these gadgets in the first place (Newsweek, 11 Aug. 2003).

*Of course, given the litigiousness of contemporary society, and people's failure to be able to imagine other responses, bullying has resulted in lots of big bucks lawsuits. One private California high school was sued for \$100 million by parents of one youngster who was "e-bullied" on his web site.

Other Violence in Schools

As society becomes ever more violent, and as children are exposed to ever more violence (e.g., in the media in which they are **STEEPED**), we should not be surprised that there is ever more violence in schools, and ever more violent violence.

*An editorial cartoon (18 Nov. 1994) showed the new ABCs as "A is for Assault, B is for Bullets, ...D is for Detectors, ...H is for Homicide," etc., all the way to "Z is for Zip Gun."

*According to one estimate, there are at any given day in the US 100,000 children in school who have a gun on them, or at least there were in 1997 (SHJ, 11 April 1997). In one mid-sized city in New York State with 17,400 students in 2004-2005, more than 125 weapons were confiscated in 38 elementary schools, and more than 4,000 incidents of violence and "disruptive behavior" were reported in that year (SPS, 19 June 2006).

*If you ask liberals what to do about school shootings by children and others, they will probably say, "wear condoms"--seriously, they will say "better gun control," but one person who grew up with many guns in the home said, "there must be some new factors at play" (Time, 9 April 2001).

*Yet another reason there is no money to devote to actual education is because it is being spent on "security" instead. One small school district in New York got one of the largest federal school grants awarded in the whole country--\$316,000--just to "improve security and safety." And this is not even a big, tough urban school district (SPS, 20 Jan. 2006). Again we ask, what will it take for people to finally concede that there is **no** shortage of money in education (as documented in an upcoming section), that the problem is not a lack of money--and that the collapse of safety in schools which derives from the collapse of society will not be solved by even armed guards in schools?

*Some schools that have begun to deploy armed security personnel euphemistically refer to them as "resource officers" (SHJ, 8 Nov. 1999). Armed police officers stationed in schools in the US (instead of the former hall monitors) are often called "school sentries." This is meant to sound less threatening, but really is not, because a sentry "stands guard."

In some US schools, guards are found not merely at the doors and in the hallways, but in specific classrooms, though they may be called "instructional aides." For instance, one class had a boy who had knifed one child and smashed the head of another with a baseball bat, and an "instructional aide" was put in the classroom with him and directed to stay within 10 feet of him at all times (Parade, 26/10/97).

One high school in Los Angeles--with a champion basketball team--has more security guards than groundskeepers. One student said the largely black student body is fed class instruction about "white devils," and said, "If that's how they're taught, I can understand why people come out of here angry" (Time, 14 Dec. 1998).

*In a Syracuse high school, 50 students became involved in a mass fight like something out of the film "Animal House." Students hit teachers, kicked out plate glass windows, and 4 police officers had to be sent in (SHJ, 17/11/93). Apparently, this sort of thing is becoming no longer unusual, e.g.,

in Philadelphia in September 2004, where reinforcements from several surrounding towns had to be called in to break up a school brawl.

*In Syracuse, 30 children on a school bus began to riot and assault the driver, throwing things at him until he almost lost control of the bus. He then stopped and ordered all pupils off the bus. In return, the school system insisted that the bus company fire him for “endangering the welfare of a child.” The driver in turn sued for damages, but a court ruled his suit to be “frivolous.”

*On the one hand, it is a real sign of the times that college and university security officers started to wear guns in the 1990s and early 2000s. On the other hand, it is yet another related sign of the times that students would say that they “do not feel safe knowing public safety officers will have guns” (SPS, 6 Nov. 03).

*Among the signs of the times and of the US public school situation, two phenomena of increasing frequency have been fights and riots started by and among girls, and parents of pupils starting fights and riots at school-related events. These sorts of events seem to be particularly common in schools with high proportions of African-American students, which of course is not politically correct to mention, but which is a testimony to a certain kind of decadence in our racial ghetto population on which we have commented before. One thing is certain: no good can come from pretending that this kind of decadence does not exist, and seems to be getting worse.

*A high school built in a slum area of Syracuse in 1975 was very presciently constructed with hardly any windows, which makes it look like the fortress it was meant to be.

*We are amazed to learn that even in Kenya, pupils—including tiny children—get searched with metal detectors before being admitted to school (SPS, 10 Jan. 04). Why? Are they trying to be modern?

*With such things as gang members dominating other pupils in US schools, sexual assaults on school buses, even gang rapes and other kinds of violence, some parents of handicapped children have begun to see the segregated “resource room” (much decried by some people) as a shelter for their children from the violence of the rest of the school and everything associated with it.

*Unfortunately, some of the responses to such school violence are so objectified as to allow no discretion to school personnel on the scene, e.g., “zero tolerance” policies that punish a student as much for bringing a pair of nail clippers to school as for bringing a switchblade knife.

*After a school had promulgated a “zero tolerance” policy towards weapons (that includes bans on squirt guns), it refused to allow a senior student who was slated to join the Army after graduation to put a picture in the graduation yearbook that showed her sitting on a cannon outside a Veterans of Foreign Wars post. This is the way we prevent violence?

*The handcuffing of children by police in US schools is a new and growing sign of the times. More and more reports are coming out of children of all ages being handcuffed and arrested in schools by police and/or school security guards, at the request of school personnel. Here are just a few examples: a 5-year-old girl in Florida who was having a temper tantrum; a 9-year-old and a 10-year-old who had “drawn threatening pictures”; a 10-year-old girl with scissors in her backpack; a 7-year-old running in the hallways; a 5-year-old in St. Louis that the principal wanted to “teach a lesson to”; 3 first graders in Florida who were fighting; a 7-year-old boy who allegedly hit his teachers; almost 30 students in one school district near Seattle (including 2 middle schoolers and 4 elementary school students) during just one school year; a dozen high school students in South Carolina, and dozens more in a Detroit high school, during drug searches that did not turn up any drugs (sources: The Detroit News, 11 June 2004; “Fox News,” 11 Dec. 2004; Education Reporter, No. 228, 1/05; “Fox News,” 26/1/05; Seattle Times, 8 April 2005; “ABC News,” 22/4/05; Wheeling News Register, 26/4/05; Boston.com, 30/4/05).

These are not isolated or unconnected incidents, but rather are signs of a pattern of growing disfunctionality. Many of our school systems are increasingly staffed with overwhelmed, unprepared and unsupported teachers. Fewer and fewer children come to school well-socialized; many parents

and teachers themselves lack the discipline necessary to raise and educate children; we live in an atmosphere of fear (including fear of children and teenagers); violence is increasingly being accepted as a valid response to personal and societal problems. Years of armed police and security guard presence in our schools have paved the way for this recent spate of handcuffing. If nothing radically changes, what is next--in-school jail cells, armed teachers in every classroom? (item from Marc Tumeinski).

*Amazingly, the FBI has started to give teachers workshops on how to be good hostages, drawing large crowds. Teachers are taught lessons such as don't cry, don't stare, never turn your back on a hostage taker, and never turn down any food he offers. A director of a training center, who hosted such an event, said, "In 40 years in education I never thought I'd be hosting an education conference on this topic" (Springfield Union News, 11 Aug. 1999; source item from Debi Reidy).

*One thing that struck us in 2006 was the huge crime wave by high school students, mostly by seniors just before graduation. To them, these were mere larky graduation pranks, but they often inflicted property damages into five figures. This was a regional phenomenon in our area that we had never noted before. Schools have tried to take all sorts of measures to prevent decadent behavior at graduation time, with very limited success. One problem is that their efforts have often been greeted by lawsuits. In one incident in our area, both seniors and their parents signed agreements that there would be no drinking before the senior prom--but when a student was found drinking, and prohibited from attending the graduation ceremonies, there promptly was a lawsuit by the very people who had signed the agreement. And wouldn't you know it, the suing student and his parents won: a court ruled that he must be allowed to attend the ceremonies, even though school law does not even make attendance mandatory. The court even ruled that neither the school superintendent, the school board, nor the school district had the authority to bar a student from attending. The public was outraged.

This is yet another example of why public schools are failing: they are deprived by the courts of almost all disciplinary options.

*Educators keep inventing one means after another to ward off reform. Under the recent US federal "No Child Left Behind" legislation, schools with a persistent record of lack of safety get a designation as a "persistently dangerous school." It is a great shame to be thusly tagged, and hangs like a sword of Damocles over the heads of school administrators and the community. The designation has proven to be a great incentive for administrators to cheat, and not to report incidences of violence. Some schools have been found to not report 90% of all violence in them. Most states report having **no** such schools, including California, successfully defeating the intent of the law. The New York State controller, commenting on the pattern among New York schools, said the schools had been "persistently deceptive," and were engaging in a "widespread cover-up," having failed to report at least a third of violent incidents, and especially the use of weapons and sexual offenses (SPS, 23 & 24 May 2006). So we obviously also need a designation of "persistently deceptive school." However, the controller cracked down so that as of 2006, of the schools designated officially as "persistently dangerous," almost all are in New York State, and almost all of these in New York City (SPS, 24/8/2006).

*Children used to be asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Now, given the violence in the youth culture, the question has become, "What do you want to be if you grow up?" (Telegram & Gazette, 22/3/2001; source item from Marc Tumeinski).

Harsh Responses as Students Become More Ill-Behaved

In response to the increasing problems in schools (which includes, but is certainly not limited to, violence by and among students), schools and school personnel resort to harsh measures. We refer to many of these measures as "flailing," because they do not get to the root or source of the problem. Some of these flailing measures might work in at least some instances, but even if they do, many of them are not even permitted or tolerated in today's climate that insists on the primacy of all sorts of supposed "rights" that these measures would violate. We have already mentioned the "zero tolerance policies" in response to student violence; here, we will detail some other such measures.

*One high school in Pennsylvania instituted “honor bathrooms”: students must sign an agreement not to vandalize or smoke in them in order to obtain a key card to use them. One entire district in California built indestructible bathrooms inspired by those in prisons (React, 25-31 Jan. 1999).

*A school bus driver walked off the job one day after he got fed up with transporting up to 70 ill-behaved children with no adult helpers to supervise them. (A close associate of the TIPS editor reports that her father drove a school bus for “handicapped” children--actually, very badly-behaved children--one year, and said he had had to put up with things from those children that he would never have put up with from his own children.)

*One teacher hid her chalk to prevent students from writing “inappropriate messages” on the blackboard (SHJ, 21 June 2000).

*The lowly kitchen staff of a Syracuse area high school finally drew the line in the sand that administrators had been too cowardly to do. After more than 50 students began a food fight in the school cafeteria, the kitchen staff decided not to cook hot meals for a few days. “Why put food out there if they are going to throw it around?” asked one staff member. The school had had a record of food fights, with 10 of them in less than three months. Students who do not participate in food fights apparently have no rights; they run up cleaning bills because they keep getting hit with food. All of this is happening while many families in the same area take recourse to food pantries to feed their families (SHJ, 22 Nov. 2000).

*Several entire school districts have begun to experiment with running schools on a military model, just as prisons have begun to do. One commentator said such desperate measures are being taken because “the problems in urban schools are so severe, and have gone on so long,” even though there have been decades of effort at school reform (Newsweek, 21 Jan. 2002).

*Of course, in many instances, school personnel resort to “merely” what used to be culturally normative home disciplinary measures, such as washing a child’s mouth out with soap, taping a child’s mouth shut, and of course, paddling and hitting. However, such normative measures are now deemed inappropriate or even abusive, and fodder for lawsuits.

Teachers Having Sex With Students

*According to a US Department of Education report (2004), between 6-10% of public school children have been sexually abused or harassed by school employees, most of it by teachers, and the rest by bus drivers, teachers’ aides, etc. If these data are correct, this would be 4.5 million students per year (NCR, 3 April 2004). Interestingly, this report received little publicity, in contrast to the media focus on abuse--both real and alleged--by Catholic priests.

According to some figures, the number of sexual abuse cases in US public schools in a given year is larger than the total number of abuse allegations against Catholic church officials in the last 50 years (FT, 5/2006). There are 3 reasons why the media have been silent on this. (a) To the politically correct (PC), the public schools are a sacred cow, and they will not admit that the schools are bankrupt, and that the PC are the people who have done it. (b) The PC use the priest sex abuse scandals to enact their hatred of God, Christianity, and above all, Catholicism. (c) Public schools in most states enjoy various kinds and degrees of governmental immunity, and/or caps on damage awards. So there is not the same financial incentive to sue them that there is to sue the Catholic church, which has become something like an ATM machine for accusers, many of whom get paid off no matter how phony their claim is.

*At the same time, charging innocent teachers with some kind of abuse has become a great sport in American schools, especially with adolescent girls (SHA, 16/4/00; SHJ, 12 Jan. 2001).

*In the past, there has always been a risk that female students would be taken advantage of sexually by male teachers particularly. However, a fairly recent phenomenon is female teachers having sex with their male students.

An increasing number of women high school teachers are having sex with their male pupils, often with several of them. One 24-year-old high school teacher in Maryland, though married, had sex with nine of her pupils, some as young as 15, and sometimes with several boys in one night. Things like this are difficult to explain, but one likely reason is the exaltation of sensualism and of selfish self-indulgence, and the collapse of inhibitions left and right due to the culture of modernism which, as we teach at our workshops, releases the animal within the human (USA Today, 6 Sept. 2001). Many such teachers had not been convicted of any crimes before, in which case criminal background checks generally are not helpful when they are being employed.

Other Dangers in Schools

The Los Angeles school system built a \$150 million mega-school in downtown LA--and then discovered that it could not use it because it had been overlooked that it was built on a toxic dump site (Newsweek, 23/7/01). However, a surprisingly large number of American schools are being built on hazardous sites because such land can be had more cheaply (AP in SPS, 22/3/01).

Efforts to Address/Combat the Problems

As the above problems of schools have become more and more prevalent, more and more evident, and harder and harder (though, as we shall see, not impossible) to avoid and deny, various measures have been adopted to deal with them. Unfortunately, because people do not want to admit and face the source of the problem--namely, a collapsing society that has decided it is going to continue on its (self-) destructive course--the corrective measures usually do not work, and sometimes even make things worse. In the last 15 or so years, virtually none of the many reform concepts and schemes have done any good, except for the school achievement testing requirement and some of the charter schools. In fact, one sometimes sees one school system implement some new reform concept at the very moment that it is phased out in another school because it has failed there. Many reform concepts have definitely made things worse, such as the "new math" and "whole language." Even so-called "direct instruction" is now sometimes interpreted as a creative innovation, although what it really refers to is what teachers used to do before the days of Dewey and his schooling philosophy (e.g., Newsweek, 30/9/02).

Schools & Money

An enduring mythology of American education and the liberal lobby is that there is a strong relationship between the amount of money spent on schools, and the educational benefits derived by the children, when one research study after another has found that **this is NOT true**. Generally, the persistent research finding is that there is no correlation between educational spending and children's achievement, or for that matter between achievement and any number of other indices, such as teachers' salaries. In other words, increased spending and smaller classrooms have both so far failed to produce results (SPS, 18/10/02). In fact, some schools get vastly superior results spending only about one-third of what some schools with terribly bad results are spending (Newsweek, 20/1/97).

Even though there is very little or no correlation between school quality and school expenditures, liberal quarters keep insisting that yet more expenditures on schools would improve them (e.g. editorial, SPS, 12 Feb. 03).

The key variables that affect children's school achievement are soundness of family structure and stability thereof, not money. One reason the PC education lobby is keeping this secret is because it has gone systematically on the warpath **against** family identity and child stability within the family. After all, families are "oppressive," a child may have "two daddies" or none at all, etc.

*Between 1920 and 2000, there was a 14-fold increase in inflation-adjusted spending on education in the US, a lengthening of the school year, and a shrinking of class sizes--and yet 1/4 of children end up virtually illiterate, and public schools have become the second most likely locale in American society for the transaction of violence (SHJ, 10 Sept. 1997; First Things, 8/01, p. 22).

*In the early 1900s, fully-trained teachers in the most pitiful schoolhouses in Appalachia were able to teach children to read who came from multi-generational illiterate, isolated, and poverty-

stricken families, even with the parents rather indifferent to education--and in just two months, as well as to write simple letters, and write numbers up to a thousand (Sherman & Henry, 1933).

*Between 1965 and 2002, the US government spent \$321 billion on education, with the outcome being a steady decline in children's academic achievement. The US Department of Education alone gets about \$55 billion a year. It was established in 1979 as a sort of pay-off of the teachers' unions by President Carter. The budget for this department since 1996 has received vastly larger percentage increases than the US Department of Health (SPS, 18/10/02).

*It is absolutely staggering how much money is being poured into schools, much of it for non-academic programs, such as controlling drugs and violence. One such federal program spent \$6 billion, apparently with little or no success. We can easily see why: the program must have been designed by the PC crowd, because it included such things as trying to get high school hoods to dress up as girls at drug-free parties (Reader's Digest, 3/99).

*Despite the huge amount of money spent on the New York City school system (\$12 billion per annum), it apparently has always been in chaos. It had 12 chancellors in 20 years, and ca. 2000, it had 50 different math curricula, 30 different reading curricula, and 12% of children changing schools every year and then likely being confronted by different reading and math curricula (CBS "60 Minutes," 27/4/03).

*Some of the worst school districts in the US have some of the highest per-student costs. In the early 1990s, the school system in Hartford, Connecticut, spent nearly \$9,000 per year per student, but there is a good question whether the pupils were better off than if half this amount had been spent (Time, 24/4/95).

*In recent years, Irish students ranked near the top in reading and math among industrial countries. This seems to have infuriated some people once they noticed that education spending in Ireland is significantly lower than in a lot of other countries where students do worse. They therefore concluded that the Irish were forcing their students to work harder, and that instead, they should increase educational spending so that presumably the students could be lazier and slip further down in their achievements (FT, 2/02).

*In one of America's **poorest** neighborhoods in the south Bronx, there is one alternative school with traditional expectations and a traditional curriculum in which the children who are failing everywhere else are succeeding, with more than 80% headed for college.

*Starting in 1993, philanthropist Walter Annenberg poured \$500 million into the American public school system, thinking that he could rehabilitate it, which of course no amount of money is capable of doing, since money is not the problem.

*The TIPS editor remembers campaigning in the 1960s for public funding of education for the handicapped who were then largely excluded from schools, with the rationale that at least as much money as was spent on each non-handicapped school child should be spent on each handicapped one, because this was a rationale virtually anybody was willing to agree to as being utterly fair. In time, of course, expectations increased, but hardly anyone would have agreed to proposals to spend 10, 20, or 30 times, or even more, per handicapped pupil as for non-handicapped pupils, and that up to 15% of the school population should be deemed eligible for such lavish subsidies. It would never have occurred to advocates in the 1960s and 70s that as much as \$320,000 might be spent per year (in 1996) to serve just one single handicapped young man (said to be "autistic") with as many as three staff members attending to him at the same time.

To educate just a single handicapped child can cost a school system up to \$330,000 a year; \$72,000 is not unusual (Newsweek, 15 May 2006). This is because handicapped children in the US have a court-defined right to an "appropriate education," which non-handicapped school children do **not** have. Their cost is usually well below \$10,000.

The state of New York Education Department pays an average of \$333,000 **each** to send 150 disturbed and ill-behaving youths out-of-state to Massachusetts to receive "treatment," at the

Rotenberg Center which includes both mechanical restraint and “aversive” electric shock “therapy,” which is not legal in NYS (AP in SPS, 15 June 2006).

There is now rising anger in US school systems at the enormous--and enormously disproportionate--cost of accommodating handicapped children. This could have very bad repercussions.

Selling Schools to Corporations, Mostly in Exchange for Money

Schools are **NOT** short of money; in fact, they are swimming in it. Nonetheless, schools are begging for money, and rolling over for entities that will give them money. These days, this means schools being taken over by corporate sponsors.

Where a for-profit corporation takes over a school, this may actually make for a more efficient operation. But it is very doubtful that it will address the core problems of contemporary schools, because inefficiency is not their **major** problem.

*With civic government and the school systems increasingly collapsing, local governments are also increasingly looking to contract out the operation of their entire school systems to private firms, apparently in desperation over their inability to cope with problems any more. Private firms have less bureaucratic baggage, but we doubt this improvement will be a significant or enduring one. Baltimore, Maryland, became the first US city to do this in June 1992, followed by Hartford, Connecticut, in 1994. (More on these schools earlier in this issue.)

*One new twist is that some US public schools have begun to contract out all sorts of educational functions to private firms even while the children still have to put in a regular day in the public schools. On an after-school basis, these firms test children, tutor them (i.e., teach them what the schools fail to teach), counsel them, and help them get into either colleges or the labor market (Time, 1 Nov. 1999).

*Interestingly, when schools set up contracts for a soft drink manufacturer to sell its products in the school buildings, to the exclusion of other manufacturers, this is now being called “pouring rights,” which one formerly might have associated with having a liquor license, or an entitlement by a beer firm to have its beer sold in a particular tavern.

*A cartoon poked fun at the commercialization of US schools, by posing the following math problem: “If Joe, wearing Nikes, ran from point ‘A’ to point ‘B’ in 5½ minutes to get a Coke, and Jane, wearing Reeboks, ran from ‘B’ to ‘A’ to get a Pepsi in 7 minutes, how many minutes from point ‘A’ would they pass each other if they changed to Pumas which made them run 10% faster?”

*Much as the business and management paradigm is taking over human services, so it is in higher education, where there is more and more talk about “customers” (students) and “products” (learning) (Academe, 1/95).

*In 2005, we were amazed to learn that in recent years, teacher conventions have become almost dominated by the presence of drug firms, and by large numbers of presentations on drugs that supposedly make children more manageable and teachable in classrooms.

Starting Magnet & Charter Schools

*Some years ago, the concept of “magnet schools” was introduced as a means to promote racial integration, with the argument that a school that became a magnet-center for the teaching of math, sciences, arts, etc., would attract students who showed special skills in, or wanted to study, that area. Such schools were to be better than other schools, at least in their area of concentration. But now, even relatively new magnet schools are being closed down due to “unacceptably low student performance” (e.g., SPS, 21 Jan. 2006).

*Surprisingly, one of the so-called magnet schools in our area was put on probation by the state Education Department because of its terribly poor performance. For instance, only 5% of its 8th

grade children performed up-to-standard on their math. Yet magnet schools were created with extra funding and all sorts of special perks, in order to attract the students from poorer schools.

*One of the magnet schools in Syracuse had a turn-over rate of tenured staff of 60% in three years, was crowded, had a confusing and fragmented curriculum and instruction, and most amazingly of all lacked science labs.

*Charter schools are another recent invention intended as a reform. A private body draws up a charter for how it will run a school, and contracts with the public school system to run such a school. A well-drawn-up charter cannot be refused. Students enroll in the charter school, and the public money that would have supported them in the public school instead gets diverted to the charter school. Charter schools thus have more flexibility and freedom than the public schools, and at no extra cost to parents or the public.

A new charter school system, called Knowledge is Power Program, or KIPP, is trumpeted as a "new concept" because it demands an academic emphasis, strict discipline, longer school days, longer school years, and caring teachers. It reportedly "works" (*Newsweek*, 24/3/2003). How could it possibly not work if it employs age-old known universal valid pedagogies?

Technology in Schools

In addition to looking to money, the people of modernism also look to technology as the solution to virtually any problem. With so many children learning so poorly in school, a common assumption in educational circles is that something must be wrong with the technology that is being used, and thus there is constant fiddling with these technologies rather than the ideologies and competencies of teachers. So schools spend what money they do have on such things as making schools "wired" to the Internet, providing individual computers to each student, and teaching students to rely on technology to solve their problems. As in the larger society, such technology often creates as many, or more, or worse problems than any that it solves.

*Like other schools all over the country, the ones in Syracuse--even the poorest among them--are being flooded with computer equipment, but amazingly, at the same time, the school district allocated hardly any money for its schools to acquire paper. One school had no paper for either its teachers or administrative tasks, or even for mailings to parents (*SHJ*, 22/9/98). Even toilet paper may be lacking.

*We are told that increasingly, teachers in school demand that children answer questions as part of their homework that can only be answered by accessing the Internet, thus both disabling children who are not able to do so for whatever reason, and forcing children whose parents may be opposed to this practice into an ideological quandary.

*Parents also now use their own computers to observe their children in school, watch how they spend their lunch money, who they talk to between classes, etc.

*In engineering schools, students do hardly any hands-on projects anymore, and now the same is happening even further down the educational chain in technology education in high school. Students less and less actually use manual tools, touch real wood, etc., and this is considered to be progress. Instead, they are being taught "how to understand technology, manage it and use it," but without actually touching anything (*SPS*, 7 May 02). Some day when real life comes along and makes demands, these students will rue their education.

*A state college in the US told parents of its incoming students in 2001 that each freshman would "need" a personal television, telephone, and computer--even though there were 2 buildings with huge blocks of computers not 5 minutes' walk from the dorms. The school--not the students, but the school personnel--also offered the parents suggestions on how to enable students to have access to their parents' credit accounts and charge cards. Who will stand for sanity anymore?

*An increasing number of students are simply downloading their term papers from the Internet where these are either being given away or sold, not to mention that some people will write

somebody else's term paper for money. Some professors rather futilely try to combat this by trying to find out what term papers are being posted on the Internet, and comparing these to the students' papers (Indianapolis Star, 8 June 1997; source item from Joe Osburn).

*In university schools of education, one can find entire departments of educational technology. In the 1970s, the TIPS editor used to refer to his colleagues in such a department at Syracuse University as "professors of overheads," for which he was often castigated. Yet in Science (13/6/97), we saw a large advertisement for an "Associate Professor of Soybean Breeding and Genetics" at the University of Illinois. The point is that formerly, one would **never** have seen professorships classified in such extremely narrow and technical terms.

Syracuse University holds a "celebrating technology week," which does exactly that, but does **not** hold even an hour or a day, let alone a week, on "critical analysis of the tremendous infiltration of society by technology, and its reliance on technology."

*Millions of children for hundreds of years had anthology-type readers from which they learned to read or improved their reading; but now that children no longer seem to learn, one interpretation has been that there must be something wrong with the readers, and educational vultures promptly started putting out what one could call "readers light," i.e., very small readers that have only a few pages each, and possibly only one or a few reading items in them.

Denial/Rejection of Tried & True Pedagogies

One reason schools and their students are doing so badly is because tried-and-true pedagogies have been overthrown (because they are boring and not fun), in favor of untried and so often ineffective ones that are new, high-tech, gimmicky, and/or make learning "fun." Unfortunately, the former are **not** attempted in efforts to address the problems.

*In 1999, we heard a faculty member of a School of Education in our area actually state that "memorization has nothing to do with learning."

What is particularly bizarre about the war against rote memorization is that it is well-known that rehearsal (e.g., of a perceptual input) is often required to transfer a short-term memory into long-term storage; and therefore, without such rehearsal, one's long-term memory will be very impoverished.

*It took a plebiscite to dismantle the disastrous bilingual education program in California, and as everything we know about pedagogy would have predicted, the Latino children "forced" to learn in English quickly picked up English, and their reading and writing scores soared, but the old line liberal educators are very unhappy about that and would like to return to the way things were, and have tried to sabotage the program (USN&WR, 6 May 02).

The empiricism of history tells us that multi-lingual societies generally work very poorly, and that successful examples are very rare and require a high price, such as an entire people willing to learn to speak multiple tongues--which our society is not prepared to do.

*Surprise! A British study based on 20 years of data found that students' work rates double if they sit in rows, rather than around small tables. The reason? In rows, they are less distracted by the socializing that occurs when they face each other (Time, 23/10/00).

*While people generally are more motivated to learn from those they love, this is particularly true for love-starved people, and these days, that often includes children. This implies **the importance of stable long-term relationships between love-hungry children and love-providing adults who are able and willing to be teachers and models** (SPS, 26 May 2006). In contemporary schools, that is difficult to come by.

*Small vs. big schools, & local vs. regional schools. One of the things that **does** work, but that has been rejected by modernistic societies, is small schools which is not the same as small classes. This almost automatically also means neighborhood schools, close enough that students can walk to them. Small local neighborhood schools are being everywhere abolished, in favor of big ones where students may not even know everyone in their grade, let alone everyone in the school.

The big schools can then afford labs, swimming pools, and to field sports teams of every kind--but in addition to their loss of educational functionality, almost all students at them get bused to school, which adds tremendous costs to the running of schools, and does not contribute to neighborhood or even family functionality. Rural US schoolchildren commonly spend 3 hours a day on the bus, and some spend 4 hours. Further, when the bus is full of poorly socialized children (see elsewhere in this TIPS issue), it can be an outright dangerous and demoralizing ride.

The self-defeating irrationality of the public schools was evident in Syracuse when the local school system proposed to close the one elementary school in the system that had the highest scores in the English language arts tests (SPS, 17/6/03). It also happened to be one of the smallest schools in the school district, which is probably one of the reasons why it did so well, but public school dogma ever since the 1950s has been to make schools as big as possible.

Substituting "Gimmickry" & Technology for Pedagogy

As schools continue to get ever worse, and children leave them ever less well-prepared for adult life, people "flail" at the problem with all sorts of gimmickry, and by manipulating things about schools that have little relationship to how well or how much children learn, such as class size, unique building designs, peer teaching, and even the color of ink that teachers use to mark and grade papers (e.g., SPS, 4 April 2005).

*We were not aware of it, but US schools give students candy as rewards for achievement and behavior (Time, 13/12/04). That is on top of feeding them junk food for at least two meals, and selling junk food on the premises from automats.

*It is very distressing to note that whenever the media play up a particular educational program as remarkable or exemplary, it is one that is riddled with gimmicks (e.g., Monitor, 6/06).

*Film producers commonly develop educational packages which they send by the zillion to school teachers or school systems to get them to use the films as teaching aids, particularly in subjects such as history. Some of these learning kits are mammoth: the one for the film "Titanic" amounted to 800 pages. (The Titanic episode should at most be a footnote in history teaching.) Amazingly, one such teaching package asked teachers to treat the fictional characters in such films as historically real, and to discuss fictional "quotations" by characters in the film as if they were for real. Teachers have complained that when they are made to use these kits, they have to spend vast amounts of time in the library doing research in order to correct this kind of misinformation (Time, 29/12/97).

*When college and university students evaluate their professors, they tend to give more weight to teaching style and delivery than knowledge or content (Monitor, 5/97 & Science 10/10/97). Actually, this is precisely what we would have predicted.

*Many middle schools in the US have eliminated honors programs for the sake of heterogeneous class groupings, which of course deprives gifted pupils of opportunities for accelerated advancement.

One of the absurdities in the "celebration of diversity" cult is that having a very heterogeneous class of pupils is celebrated as a diversity--but the individual superior mentality of its brightest students is not promoted because that would reduce the diversity of the **collectivity**.

*In many schools, teachers are not even called teachers anymore, but facilitators. (See earlier section in this issue on teacher quality and qualifications for more on this.)

*For decades now, there has been a leading educational and psycho-pop theory that children will do poorly in school if they are low in so-called self-esteem. However, the research has shown that "black" pupils have the highest self-esteem, but perform very poorly in school--which is exactly the opposite of what would be the case if the theory were true (NCR, 24/6/01).

Remedial Education & Tutoring

With students failing to learn, there has been a dramatic upsurge in remedial education and private tutoring.

*An amazing new development is that some US public schools have begun to hire outside organizations to tutor their students after school hours. Why not just plain shut down and hand over the children completely to more competent educational parties if such actually exist? However, one unfortunate aspect of all this is that the contracting may be to other parties that are also incompetent, such as neighborhood centers in poor areas (e.g., SPS, 12 Aug. 02).

*The schools having failed to teach children, or convince them that they ought to study and learn, while having told them that they knew enough to feel good about themselves and pass to the next grade, led many students to assume that their low achievement was a high achievement. So now schools are calling in people from outside the schools to give students the necessary bad message--in other words, to deflate their self-esteem. These may be people from colleges and universities, and from various occupations, who show the students what kind of proficiency they need in math, reading, etc., in order to get and keep certain jobs. This is called a "reality check." On the one hand, this probably makes many things more real to the students, and it has indeed often been a common failure in generic public education that much learning had no reality to students. On the other hand, it is one more gimmick to try to raise the test scores of students, and get the schools to do what they are supposed to have been doing all along (SPS, 5 May 2001, pp.A1-A2).

*Parental confidence in US schools has dropped so low that 42% of Americans believe that children should receive private tutoring on the side. In response to public school failure, tutoring firms have sprung up that charge as much as \$125 an hour. The greatest market for tutoring is for the top 5% of pupils and the bottom 15%. Many children are flunking more advanced math because they were never taught the basic rote arithmetic, such as multiplication tables. Some tutors and home schoolers are scouring used-book stores for old-fashioned texts that solidly teach the basics which texts in recent decades very commonly do not. One mother was scandalized that her child's **mathematics** book was full of maps of South America (for the sake of PC multiculturalism) and poetry, but contained hardly any equations. All of this is rather scandalous considering that US children may spend as many as six hours a day in school. Because so many gifted children, and children in academically demanding schools, have been getting tutoring, tutoring has lost much of the stigma it once had. This is an example of the so-called normalization of deviancy.

*Colleges have been pressured more and more to provide remedial education to students who were not taught what they needed to learn in order to be in college. More than 50% of entering college students in the US require remedial course work--and yet, many wasted much of their last year in high school. The latter is a peculiar American custom (Time, 15 May 2006). However, a few people still believe that colleges should not assume the remedial education role, but a lot of other people see it as somewhat akin to affirmative action--but they take great umbrage at remedial classes being called "remedial," and instead want them sanitized by being called things such as "fundamentals of writing," or just plain "algebra," etc. (APA Monitor, 8/97).

Lengthening/Shortening the Time in School

*With the collapse of social structures, and especially urban areas, more and more school systems are starting school late in the year or shutting down early--on top of already short US school years. Even school systems near the top in per-student expenditures--as in New York City--have already experienced shortened school years due to bureaucratic hassles, wanton waste and graft.

When school systems have to close down during the school year because they are running out of money (as has been happening), then surely one has to admit that a form of collapse is occurring.

*At the same time, one teachers' union has proposed adding one more year of high school, supposedly so that the students can learn the basic skills that all their other years of schooling have failed to teach them (e.g., SHJ, 3 July 2000).

*A fascinating confusion of tongues took place in a proposal in Syracuse (Syracuse Herald-Journal, 7 June 1981) to reduce the amount of time that truant children would be required to attend school. The superintendent of schools proposed an “alternate school program” that would consist of only 2.5 hours of schooling a day instead of the ordinary 5.5 hours. The rationale presented was two-fold: (a) regular students were really only receiving 3.5 hours of educational benefits in their 5.5 hour-day anyway, and thus not much was lost by reducing the schooling of the truant children to 2.5 hours; (b) that a 2.5 hour program for the truant children would be more intensive than that offered at regular school days to the other children. If these assertions were true, one would have to infer that an ordinary school day consists of a vast amount of wasted time, or one might thus ask either why the regular school day should not be cut, or why the wasted time cannot be used to better effect. Alternatively, if the school day for truant children can be made so much more “intensive” during its 2.5 hours, why could not the same--or even a higher degree--of intensity be introduced for motivated, and perhaps even highly capable and gifted, children? Interestingly, it was noted in the proposal that such a drastic reduction in educational services to truant children would be able to elicit **additional** state aid. One may wonder what the purpose of additional state aid is. Is it conceivable that a Russian village service for truant children was being proposed so as to subsidize services to other children--and conceivably, even services of low utility, as suggested by the superintendent? The whole proposal smacked either of babble, or of some kind of deception.

Tests & Testing in Pre-College Schooling

*While many people are decrying the increasing testing mania in American schools, the fact is that this is merely a reaction to the schools failing to teach the children, and tests are seen as a desperate last-ditch measure for finding out what is actually happening, and to keep children from being advanced from grade to grade without having learned anything, or presenting themselves to colleges without basic literacy and other skills. Instead of taking this slap to their faces to heart, educators have begun to “teach to the tests,” instead of what the children are supposed to learn. In some classes, 80% of the time is spent teaching to the test. In some states, the state has begun to take over certain local school districts that are unwilling or incapable of teaching the children what they should (Time, 15/2/99).

*While we are certainly in support of making schools and teachers accountable, it is shocking to learn that there is a powerful trend now in American schools not only to teach almost entirely to the tests, but to also warp the entire curriculum to serve nothing else but that. Schools that do not even have libraries have been spending vast sums of money to buy teaching packages that do nothing but teach to tests.

*There is much resistance by educators against testing of children against reasonable educational standards. After all, tests show up the schools’ failures. Test opponents are even outright lying about what research has shown about testing (Newsweek, 17/5/99).

*One of the stupid leftist arguments against testing was expressed in Time (5 July 1999): “You can’t successfully use standardized tests for individuals with different learning styles and disabilities.” The whole idea of **standardizing** tests is to be able to compare any given person against a large collective norm.

*New York State began to mandate that school performance be monitored by administering achievement tests to the pupils, and one result has been that many more children began to be diagnosed as “learning disabled,” giving a big boost (including in membership) to the private voluntary Learning Disabilities Association (SPS, 25/4/01).

*In their desperation to cover up their failures as educators, and the failures of the schools, educators have promoted a new way of trying to “assess” a pupil’s abilities and performance through a method called “portfolio assessment,” which consists of the accumulation of a student’s work products over time in a set of documents (a portfolio). While keeping a longitudinal record of a person’s life, learning and performance are certainly advisable, this method has many limitations and problems. One problem is that it is impossible to ascertain whether the student produced the items independently, and knowing how much cheating educators do to make their students look good, one

can be skeptical, particularly since it is mostly the educators (or other people with a vested interest, such as parents or the pupils themselves) who control what goes into the portfolio.

In our opinion, much more advisable would be to use standardized tests and portfolios simultaneously, and thoroughly and objectively investigate any discrepancies between these two.

*A book on geometry teaching in US schools, and the review of this book in American Scientist (1/04), concluded that the emphasis on standardized tests in US schools has virtually guaranteed that American students will never receive any significant geometry instruction in school because geometry is hardly covered in the tests, and that the situation is almost as bad in the United Kingdom.

*At a time of declining child competence, school learning and school teaching, it is amazing that the National Parent-Teacher Association took out a half-page ad in Time (19/3/90) showing a child's report card with all As and Bs, and announcing that this was a disaster because children were exposed to "incredible amounts of stress" to achieve. The Association recommended that young people should be given more realistic goals, and talked to about "family changes they might be experiencing--divorce, moving, unemployment, death"--a striking example of normative insanity and attempts to justify school collapse.

Grading Schools' Performance

Not only is the performance of students being tested and graded, but now so is the performance of entire schools. A school gets good grades if a certain percentage of its students pass standardized tests that show they are performing up to or above grade level. This is one of the incentives for schools and teachers to cheat.

US federal law, and laws in many states, allow parents to pull their children from schools if the school as a whole is performing very poorly, and put them into better-performing schools--but there is one hitch: in many locales, there either are no better-performing schools, or all the available places in them have already been taken. Of course, the liberals continue to dispute that group performance testing in schools has any meaning whatever, because they cannot afford for their phony educational and societal theories to be refuted.

*In New York City, almost 500 schools out of 1200--or 42% of them--were graded as "in need of (academic) improvement" in 2003 (SPS, 11 Sept. 2003).

And in the Los Angeles school district, 130 of the 550 schools (24%) were rated as "failing" (Newsweek, 23/7/01).

*Liberals have been screaming bloody-murder when schools were required to subject all the children to periodic testing to make sure that the schools were accomplishing something. Despite the constant high-profile harassment of this measure by the liberal left, the Syracuse area schools at least experienced dramatic improvement after testing was implemented. Some schools improved almost 300% in just three years (SPS, 11 Feb. 03).

Teachers & Schools Cheating

*From 1990-2003, there was much publicity about teachers cheating massively and systematically by providing test answers to children, falsely reporting their students' scores, and even teaching their students that **not** helping others on tests constituted cheating.

This is how it is possible for the majority of American schools to score above average in pupil achievement. Cheating involves such strategies as: administrators releasing the tests early to their teachers and then getting the teachers to teach the pupils how to answer the test items that they will be taking; teachers correcting the mistakes that pupils make on tests; and pupils even being given the tests beforehand to study up on them. Participation in this scam extends from the pupil and teacher all the way up to the highest level, and certainly to superintendencies and school boards. Among the many incentives for such cheating are that superintendents get raises, and teachers may get cash bonuses or other perks, if their pupils do well. In essence, what all this boils down to is that the nationwide mass achievement testing in the schools gets made worthless, and that pupils, their parents and the public have been lied to for decades, and led to believe that the children are much

higher-achieving than they really are (CBS-TV “60 Minutes,” 25/3/90; Time and Newsweek, various issues, 1990, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003; SPS, 27 Oct. 2003).

*One of the innumerable ways in which US school administrators are trying to cheat on their students’ performance tests is by feeding them high-fat or high-sugar meals on examination days (Newsweek, 16/12/02). This is certainly one way to give up on one’s obligation to actually teach children.

*In another kind of cheating, what the New York state’s comptroller called “the largest, most remarkable, most extraordinary theft” from a school system in American history occurred on Long Island, where more than 25 school officials participated in an embezzlement scheme for more than a decade, stealing at least \$11.2 million (SPS, 12 Nov. 2005). Of course, with the vast amounts of money flowing into the schools, and the complexity of the bureaucracy, one can understand how this would present great temptation and opportunity to would-be thieves. At least in this case, it was a rich school system that got stolen from.

Miscellaneous Reform Measures

*It is amazing what trivialities people in our collapsing culture have energy for that they should invest in important issues. California school officials scrapped books with a version of the fairy tale of “Little Red Riding Hood” because of complaints that the little girl brought her grandmother a bottle of wine (Time, 4 June 1990).

*Large numbers of “black” and “Hispanic” parents would like their children to attend single-sex schools in order to prevent at least a little bit of decadence and pregnancies, but there aren’t any, and the liberal rights nuts won’t let them (SPS, 28/5/02). To them, stupid--and even dead--children are preferred to political incorrectness.

*With so many schools in the US failing, parents have become even more conscious than they used to be of where they live. Many of them are determined that they will not live anywhere except in a locale that has a good school district, but one consequence has been that the price of homes in such districts has skyrocketed, putting parents under even greater financial pressures (Time, 10/03).

*In the US, schools have been a local operation (unlike in Canada, where they are run by each province). Thus, when American schools are utterly collapsing, another flailing response has been to turn them over to the states, or even the courts, to administer. This sometimes restores a certain amount of order, but again fails to get to the root of the problem.

Teachers & Their Unions Objecting to Any Reform Measures

*Teachers and their unions have almost a knee-jerk reaction to any proposal--good or bad--for school reform, and that is to oppose it--despite the fact that teachers in many locales do not send their own children to the public schools. Particularly likely to stir up such reactions are proposals to bring in outside companies, or non-unionized teachers, to run schools (as in so-called charter schools); or to divert any of the money that now goes to the public schools to any other kind of schools.

*A retired road builder who had sold his construction firm offered \$200 million to build 15 small independent charter schools in the inner city of Detroit, which was so venomously opposed by the Detroit teachers’ union that he withdrew the offer (Time, 3 Nov. 03).

*The objects of some of the fiercest attacks from both the public schools and the teachers’ unions so far have been so-called “vouchers” and “charter schools,” both schemes which enable parents to send their children to either private schools or alternate-public ones, and which divert some public tax monies from the public schools to pay for the children at these other schools. The objections have to do entirely with the fact that the public schools receive less money under these schemes, and that alternative schools would put public ones to shame. However, the objections are cloaked in arguments about separation of church and state (because many of the private schools to which vouchers would go are church-run schools), and about the comparative results of public

schools and charter schools. In fact, because of the vested interests, it may be impossible to tell whether any of the research done that purports to compare the effectiveness of public with charter schools has any validity. However, even without research, one **can** know that schools that can be more “discriminatory” in who they accept as pupils, that can enforce standards for student behavior (as well as for parental participation), and that otherwise have the freedom to do what it takes to teach, will be more effective than contemporary public schools which cannot--or choose not to--do these things.

Other liberals have claimed that the studies that showed that African-American students who did better at private schools that they attended with the aid of vouchers were not valid (SPS, 16/9/00).

What Young Minds Are Truly Capable Of--& Lies About What Young Minds Are Capable Of

*Before the advent of modern schools, there were people who, with very little formal education, managed to learn prodigious amounts of material. For instance, the Methodist minister Adam Clarke (1760-1832) was fluent in at least 20 languages without ever having been to a university, and wrote an 8-volume commentary on the Bible which was required reading for Methodist clergy until the middle of the 20th century (CH, 2001, No. 69).

*During the British oppression of Ireland, illegal “hedge schools” (so-called because the schooling was conducted secretly out along hedges in the countryside) led ultimately to that country having one of the highest literacy rates in the world, despite hundreds of years of suppression of formal and legitimate schooling. But today, in schools that have everything and where teachers are highly credentialed, children are doing very poorly.

*Benjamin Franklin had very little formal education, and became a printer’s apprentice at age 12. Nonetheless, he had read Plutarch, Defoe, many other English writers and poets, and the works of the philosopher John Locke. In fact, he seems to have read these while still an apprentice.

*Both times George Washington was inaugurated as president, he used complicated sentences that were about 90 words long--and everybody understood him. This was because his listeners had been raised on the King James Bible, the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, and great works of literature such as John Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress. With the gradual dumbing-down of American education, the average length of sentences in presidential inaugural addresses has dropped: 44 words for Buchanan, 34 from Lincoln through Wilson, and since then to about 25. Perhaps we should all strive to speak in longer sentences so as to help people to regain some measure of the intellectual nimbleness of which they are quite capable (Newsweek, 22/1/01).

*John Stuart Mill could read Greek at age 3. Today, children displaying propensities for such precocity would be actively prevented from actualizing these, and would be steered toward inane socialization games and play.

*In 1827, at age 4, Francis Galton, cousin of Charles Darwin, wrote his sister, “I am 4 years old and I can read any English book. I can say all the Latin Substantives and Adjectives and active verbs besides 52 lines of Latin poetry. I can cast up any sum in addition and can multiply by 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, (9), 10, (11). I can also say the pence table. I read French a little and I know the clock.” By the age of 6, Galton was conversant with the Iliad and the Odyssey (Morgan, 1936, p. 331). Today, we congratulate ourselves if 18-year-olds can read!

*The American intellectual and writer George Steiner, still productive in 2000, was able to recite the Iliad and the Odyssey by memory in the original Greek by the time he was 12. Our contemporary educators would probably bring up his parents for child abuse. He wrote (in Grammars of Creation, 2001) that our culture is in a stage of Sprachkrise, i.e., a crisis of language, which is intertwined with the ideology of constructionism.

*It is a sign of our times that even though Harry Truman was the last US president who plowed with a horse, and was not educated beyond high school, he was better-read and more learned than any of the subsequent presidents (Newsweek, 7 Sept. 1992). That much for the benefits of advanced education and of “progress.”

*There was a 6-page article in Newsweek (29/4/02) which reported excitedly that young children have absorbent minds and can learn to read and do other things, while they are instead being kept in enlightened baby-sitting situations in so-called pre-schools. All this amounts to a rediscovery of what Maria Montessori knew more than 100 years ago, but without ever giving her credit.

*An old teacher reported that right after World War II, she was assigned a class of 70 first graders, but she had no major discipline problem and all her students learned to read and write in the first year. Other old teachers tell much the same story. Now, children no longer learn to read and write even in very small classes, all due to a supposedly genetic attention deficit disorder, which apparently must have mysteriously arisen as a new mutation in post-war children (SHJ, 24/10/98).

*Public school kindergarten teachers say that their children are becoming more and more stupid every year. More than half in 1991 could not give their first and last names when asked, their address, or identify colors. It was rather sad that this news was accompanied by two other bits of adult stupidity, namely the teachers interpreted this as the children being "not ready to learn," and the president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching said that one of the major answers was more federal money (Newsweek, 16/12/91).

*While US educators keep telling us that children in effect are unable to learn, Muslim children all over the world are memorizing the Koran at an early age, and often in a language that they do not know (Arabic).

*However, a study found that the typical 10-year-old **has** learned 300 or more commercial brand names (Mouth, 1/05).

*Due to intense parental engagement, a Florida child with Down's syndrome, born in the late 1980s, was able, by age 5, to converse relatively fluently in English and Spanish, and by age 6 to read and write, shoot baskets, and swim, though his measured IQ was only in the low 70s. In our schools, youths with high IQs can go all the way through college and not know anything about a second language, and they may only be able to print letters (Philadelphia Inquirer Magazine, 20/6/99).

*Quite likely due to a form of anti-intellectualism in this age of constructionism, Newsweek (30/3/98) found that schools all over the country are in the habit of steering capable students **away** from the more demanding courses.

*In 1954, African-American high school students in Baltimore, Maryland, actually performed much better on algebra than Caucasian students, even despite segregation. Now we have integration and **nobody** learns, and urban schools have become first and foremost a PPP system for giving employment to an African-American middle class that, according to a Time special report (27/10/97), has essentially given up on the African-American underclass.

The Embarrassing (to the Public Schools) Performance of Church-Run Schools That Are Less Well-Funded & Have Larger Classes

In the US at least, church-run and Catholic parochial schools are less well-funded than the public schools, have larger classes, and typically include among their student bodies a significant portion of students from the poorest urban neighborhoods--students who typically fare badly in schools. Yet such schools consistently outperform better-funded public schools that have many more resources, more staff, and smaller classes. Nonetheless, the school systems and government have consistently been hostile towards such private church-run schools and their results, and have put up tooth-and-claw resistance to measures that would enable more parents to take their children out of public schools and send them to private church-run schools (multiple sources).

Home-Schooling, & the Embarrassing (to the Formal Schools) Performance of Children Who Are Home-Schooled

In recent decades, there has been a small but ever growing segment of the population that teaches their children at home, called "home-schooling." Sometimes, they do this for religious

reasons, sometimes for other ideological reasons. Such children consistently fare better than children who attend public schools--and again, the government and school systems consistently go to war against home-schooling and home-schooled students.

In 1897, US courts settled that all children must be educated, but not necessarily "in any particular way," meaning that they can be educated in public schools, private residential or non-residential schools, at home, etc. It is a decision that has never really been accepted by certain circles, and home education especially makes public school people and liberals furious.

One national television news program broadcast a segment on "the dark side" of home schooling, which was so imbalanced that it elicited protest from, among others, 33 members of the US Congress (NCR, 9-15/11/2003).

*In Utah, the state took away 4 children from a family that decided to home-school them, and put them into foster care even though there was no charge of parental abuse. It then put the children on psychiatric mind drugs against the parents' will (ICSPP Newsletter, Spring 1998).

*There were, in 2001, about 850,000 US children being schooled at home, compared to almost 50 million in official schools (SPS, 3 Aug. 2001). The number has continued to increase since then.

*When a new private college for home-schooled youngsters opened in Virginia, American public school educators were scandalized. The executive director of the American Association of School Administrators exclaimed, "When does this child" (meaning the home-schooled child) "learn to face the real world?" (AP in SHA, 1 Oct. 2000). Of course, the "real world" he referred to is that of foul language, violence, wasted educational time, promiscuity, etc.

The SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test)

*The SAT was once an acronym for Scholastic Aptitude Test, but as is now so common, the words the acronym stood for have been abolished, and SAT now stands for nothing. It is a test whose results are used in college applications and admissions.

In response to mostly PC/diversity fury, the SAT was totally changed in order to assure that stupid youths who were unmotivated and got a bad education, children from homes that do not value education, and foreigners who are poor in English, would not score so low. One way of doing this was to get rid of "tricky reasoning" items, which also boosted the scores of girls, even though all along they had done better than boys in English. (No changes were made to improve boys' scores on English.) Also dropped were certain objective tests of English language knowledge, and instead an essay-writing test was added that must be graded laboriously by presumed qualified humans. (Much new PPP employment here!) However, one thing on which students are not graded is spelling (Newsweek, 22/8/2005). An illiterate speller can now earn a top grade. Also, lengthy essays get higher scores, even if they contain all sorts of factual errors (SPS, 8 May 2005). The essay test also rewards use of clichés, and penalizes originality.

All this was an enormous dumbing down, and the PC reviewer of the test in Time (11 Sept. 2006) enthusiastically approved.

*Backing the continued use of the SAT are 4300 higher educational institutions that by means of the test have been trying to force the primary and secondary schools to quit dumbing-down their students (Time, 27/10/03).

Colleges, Universities, & Their Students

Certain things we have reported on might not be surprising in elementary and secondary school students who, after all, "have" to go to school, and at least some of whom some of the time would rather be somewhere else. However, one expects better things of college students who are older, presumably more mature, and have more motivation to attend school. Further, one expects more and better of colleges and universities as educational bodies. Unfortunately, one's expectations are likely to be disappointed.

*It has now gotten to the point where almost all US colleges offer remedial courses, especially in reading, writing and mathematics, and 29% of freshmen take them (Academe, 1/97). Taxpayers are paying \$1 billion for such classes. Of course, they already paid several times over to have the children taught first in day care, kindergarten, elementary school, middle school, and then in high school, plus all the remedial programs there. Conservatives want to cut remedial education in college, and we believe that it would be a wonderful remedy, and a shock message to the population about the bankruptcy of public education.

*It used to be that before students went to college, they had learned to write. More advanced skills in writing used to be taught as part of English courses in college. Now, students arrive at college so illiterate that some colleges and universities have instituted "writing programs" which are **not** the same as the English Departments.

*The vast majority of students in colleges who have "disabilities" have "learning disabilities" (SHA, 12 Feb. 1995). We have come to strongly suspect that the **majority** of students admitted to college these days are "learning disabled" in some way.

*A professor of the humanities noted that English departments in the United States have lost their rationales for existence, insofar as their faculties have both lost interest in literature itself, and are refusing to teach their students how to write (First Things, 1/01).

*As of 1990, in 93% of American colleges, students could graduate without ever having been required to read one of the classics of Western literature, 71% did not require foreign languages, 58% did not require philosophy, 37% did not require mathematics, English or American literature, 29% required no natural and physical sciences, and 28% required no history (USN&WR, 28/5/90). All this is sadly familiar to the TIPS editor who every year for many years used to review student applications for scholarships for graduate study in education. It was very sad to observe that there were many applicants who came with virtually no college courses in most of the above subjects, and yet more frequently with none in at least several of these categories. One student who had had no more than one single basic college math course was applying to become a math teacher. Yet the TIPS editor encountered virtually no concern about any of this among his professorial colleagues. In fact, the overwhelming trend among them has been to require or value more courses in education, at the cost of a broader education.

A study by the National Association of Scholars said that even the best colleges across the US are no longer requiring students to be familiar with the most basic facts of the country's history, literature, philosophies, and political and economic systems. Students are also getting by with less exposure to the natural sciences and mathematics. Most of these changes have occurred since the 1960s, and are intimately tied to the decline in required courses. In 1914, a college typically required 10 mandatory courses, while by 1993 this had shrunk to 2.5. College students in America no longer have to learn American--or to some degree even Western--history, and they have consequently been shown to know less about American history upon graduation than even high school students at one time knew. In other words, college education is no longer concerned with general education and with bringing about some kind of a shared knowledge base such as had sustained earlier generations of the country and Western society, and contributed to a common bond (Academe, 5/96).

*Isn't it revealing of the shams of this world when almost all children are getting high school diplomas, and almost half go on to get college degrees, that the literacy rate is lower than it was several decades ago?

*So many efforts to lift up the disadvantaged involve pulling down gifted and achieving students. In 2006, Harvard announced that it would eliminate its early admissions program because it advantaged better students--"the already advantaged" (SPS, 13/9/2006). We would have thought that there were other ways to admit more "disadvantaged" students.

*Paul Loeb traveled across the country visiting scores of college and university campuses and interviewing students. In 1994, he reported (Generation at the Crossroads) that the vast majority of students were ignorant about their heritage and about large social issues, knew little about the events of the last few decades, lacked all embarrassment about being so ignorant, and yet readily expressed

outrage about all sorts of topics about which they had not the faintest notion or facts. Apparently, consistent with the academic constructionist culture, they did not seem to believe that facts and knowledge have a role to play in forming opinions. The majority seemed to be in school in order to earn the credentials for a middle-class career rather than to learn. At the same time, students were not really personally engaged in any meaningful activism, even on those issues on which they pontificated with great assurance and passion, though in more recent years, there seem to have been more exceptions to this rule than there were in the late 1980s.

*Once upon a time when college students were still smart, there used to be a question commonly posed in college debates: "Can a Chimera, ruminating in a vacuum, disseminate second intentions?"

*We know of at least one instance (and where there is one, there are bound to be more) where a university bookstore refused to sell students textbooks for their courses before the semester began. One student wanted to get a jump on her course reading, but was told that the bookstore could not sell it to her because it was reserved for the next semester. So even though she was registered for the class, and was motivated enough to want to do her reading in advance, the university blocked her. (Yes, we know, they probably had all sorts of good bureaucratic reasons why....)

*Montgomery, M. (1999). The truth of things: Liberal arts and the recovery of reality. Dallas, TX: Spence. The author writes on the state of contemporary education, and made the point that a liberal education should try to connect a mind in formation with reality, and especially with the reality of the human condition. Instead, current liberal education tries to give students an "autonomous mind," so as to recreate reality in their own image or to their own liking, and hence to be separated from both reality and the divine.

*A professor who used to require that students read 5 or 6 books each semester for his course confessed that he cut this down to 3 or 4, or else the students would simply no longer take his non-required course (Smithsonian, 11/02).

*We were surprised to note that a 1991 description of a **graduate** course on education at Syracuse University warned students that "some topics require mastery."

*At the same time, it is known that people will rise to high expectations that are set for them. As an example, from 1970-79, the University of Kansas had an Integrated Humanities Program, in which freshmen and sophomores met bi-weekly and listened to lectures sprinkled with Latin, and read classic literature and poetry (the so-called Great Books). It was open to any students who were interested. Students were not permitted to take notes in class, but they were required to memorize poems. Many former students later attested that it was the "defining educational experience" of their lives (NCR, 6-12/3/05)

*Well, what then **are** college students studying? All over the US, colleges and universities are offering courses with sex or pornography titles, which go as far as involving students in sexual and pornographic activities. At the University of California at Berkeley, one can get credit for listening to lectures from porn stars and experts on sex toys, going to gay strip clubs, and witnessing one's instructor having sex on stage. Among the course activities are students taking photographs of their own genitals and faces, and then asking fellow students to match the lowers with the uppers, for "everyone to get to know each other." (We would have thought that administering mutual anal examinations could have accomplished that.) At Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts (a very prestigious women's college), porn course students attend erotic dances from a former stripper, and go to local strip clubs to perform there. The Dean of Faculty opined that this "seems to build self-esteem," which we did not know to be the purpose of higher education. The equivalent course at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst is taught by an author of one of the "queer theory" texts who is a promoter of pornography. He claims that a study of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" is just as good as Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream." At Wesleyan, students enrolled in Women's Studies were required to produce their own pornography of themselves (RD, 3/03).

*“When freedom of speech is considered a patriarchal tool of oppression, when truth appears only within quotations marks, when Christian groups must accept non-Christian candidates for election to leadership posts, when academic freedom means trying out sex toys in workshops, and when tuition buys credit hours for watching surgically inflated actresses in filmed copulation, this is not your father’s university” (B&C, 5/05)--to say the least.

*A critic said that the problem with college students is that after having been raised by parents who abdicated their parental responsibilities, they are sent to live at colleges that no longer act in loco parentis, nor believe any longer in strengthening character (FT, 2/05).

*In the fall of 1989, six rapes were reported on or near the Syracuse University campus, mostly of female students. Since there was a tremendous outcry, the university installed 24 lamp posts all over the campus that have a blue light on top and a pushbutton on the bottom so people can summon help. This quieted down most of the outcry, but the stupidity of all of this lies in the fact that so many rapes are said to be acquaintance rapes, or rapes of relatively new and young female students who go to a bar to drink and then let themselves be taken home by men who are strangers to them. In either such cases, the 24 alarm button lights would be of no avail. It is also very difficult to explain in any rational fashion the fact that despite the unrelenting publicity about rape in the campus area, female students take the grossest of risks, such as traversing dark areas at night in order to save a few steps; getting drunk under risky circumstances; going to fraternities known to be raunchy, and so on. One is very hard put to understand such things. In the meantime, we have heard of no cases at all of the rape lights ever being used.

It truly must be a sign of our times that a group, entitled “Women for Women: A Support Group for Survivors of Rape, Sexual Assault, and Incest,” has been started exclusively for students and employees of Syracuse University (source item from Dorothy Cornish).

*It is fascinating to read the periodic reports of the Office of Judicial Affairs of Syracuse University, which deals with infractions against University rules. For instance, a student who had “nonconsensual sexual intercourse” with a female complainant at an off-campus location was barred from the University for a 5-year period and was urged to seek counseling. Another student who had committed the same offense only received disciplinary probation and “counseling and facilitated conversation,” because the complainant requested “informal resolution.” Thirteen students were accused of “harassing or threatening the mental health of other persons.” This included a female falsely accusing a male of rape, and a male student making “annoying telephone calls” to another male student (Syracuse Record, 20/3/95).

*The infamous week-long “spring break” at colleges has become infamous because many students head to resorts to do nothing but get drunk and fornicate as much and as often as they can with as many as possible during the week. 74% of college females say they have “increased sexual activity” on these trips, and 57% said they are more promiscuous in order to “fit in” (SPS, 10 March 2006; Time, 20 March 2006). Some students have never been able to afford this week of debauchery, and have simply gone to their parents or to friends for the week. Now, some students are devoting their spring break to volunteer projects (e.g., Break Away), such as helping to clean up the hurricane damage in the Gulf Coast, building homes for the poor, teaching children in poor inner-city schools, caring for nursing home residents, etc. (NCR, 26 March-1 April 2006).

*The deep decadence of students of Syracuse University keeps constantly being brought to an observer’s awareness, in innumerable ways. We assume that what we see is not a biased, but a typical, example of the culture of young people today.

A large crowd of drinking students began to brawl and riot in a residential neighborhood next to the campus. Of the hundreds of drunken rioters, 39 were arrested, and 21 were suspended by the university. Being rich spoiled kids, they promptly got expensive lawyers to **order** the suspensions lifted, and the host of the house where it all started demanded an apology from the university--but never apologized for his behavior, or the affront to the neighbors or the community.

*“Experts” claim that about 30% of college students gamble at least once a week, usually betting on sports outcomes. College athletes bet even more, close to 50% (Newsweek, 19/4/99).

*More and more college students are seeking personal counseling. Reportedly, they are finding their lives more stressful, more at risk of random violence and sexual abuse, and beset by spiraling tuition costs. Many come with crazy behavior patterns already established, such as eating disorders. More find themselves in crisis or on the edge of emotional emergencies. More of them get into fights, engage in vandalism, and attempt suicide or turn to drink and drugs. Many have of course had early sex experiences and come from broken families. For many of them, job prospects after graduation are quite unclear. At Colgate University, the number of students seeking counseling tripled over 10 years and reached about 18%--and that was over 10 years ago (SHA, 20/11/94).

*There have been mass riots by unruly and drunken students at Michigan State University, Iowa State University, and the University of New Hampshire, and no one (except we) seems to know the reason for it, namely that youths of college age these days have been reared as empty, uncontrolled spoiled children (Lawrence (Mass.) Tribune, 24/9/97; source item from Nancy Rampulla).

*This is another sign of the times that is hard to believe. Some colleges have begun to reserve some of their student housing for students interpreted to be "recovering alcoholics" (Newsweek, 16/12/91).

*And yet the PC have been up in arms about a novel by Tom Wolfe, entitled I Am Charlotte Simmons. It portrays life at even elite colleges as rife with binge drinking, foul language, predatory sex, and academic dishonesty (FT, 2/05).

*We were taken aback to learn that the Syracuse University staff includes a 2-member "food allergy program team," and a 6-member "jumpstart team," a 7-member "English literacy training team," a 4-member "advising practitioners forum group," a 3-member "gear up program team," and a 7-member "interactive job action notice team." Except for the English literacy training team, we have not the foggiest notion what the others do. We suspect that this is nothing unique to Syracuse University, and that other universities have their equivalent.

*A Texas Tech University biology professor will not support an application of any student for graduate studies who does not subscribe to the theory of evolution (NCR, 16/2/03).

*One way in which college athletes manage to maintain their academic standing to play for their colleges is by passing tests with questions such as the following one from the University of Georgia: "How many points does a 3-point field goal account for in a basketball game?" (Time, 15/3/04).

*College athletes are often hired away into professional sports, and then receive fabulous salaries. However, many come from sub-cultures in which it is not customary to spend prudently, or to save and invest. Many enter a lifestyle of mindless profligacy and ostentatious spending, including on non-enduring goods, such as flashy cars. Thus, it often happens that some of these fabulously rich athletes soon end up bankrupt. One such Syracuse University basketball player who had been earning \$300,000 a year ended up broke as a recreation aide at \$22,000 a year (SPS, 27/3/04).

*But perhaps these students are merely imitating their models. At Syracuse University, the head football coach for 2004-05 was paid \$989,000, more than the Chancellor at \$592,000. The third highest paid was the basketball coach at \$487,000, followed by the athletic director at \$483,000 (SPS, 16/11/05). These data are a striking commentary on what things are worth in our society, and that the academic activities of the university are much less important than the athletic and entertaining ones.

*A good example of the insanity in American academia is Syracuse University in 2004 increasing its undergraduate tuitions by a whopping 6.4% in a single year, all in order to make up the budget deficit of its athletics department with its extravaganza sports events.

*Ever since the birth of universities, it has been customary to allow anybody who wishes to drop in on a professor's lecture, called auditing. In other words, ordinary citizens on the street could come and sit in on any professor's class. This tradition has never been appreciated in American

universities, and in the last few decades has been explicitly banished, for purely financial and managerial reasons. We were taken aback when Syracuse University sent out its “grading policy changes for academic rules and regulations” of 1994 which prohibited people “from attending, being evaluated, auditing, or otherwise participating in regular semester courses without being officially enrolled.” In fact, professors would not even be allowed to admit such persons to their classes. Several hundred years of university traditions were quietly wiped out in a minor paragraph of a relatively casual communication, with not a word of dissent from the faculty.

*For its commencement speaker in 5/03, Syracuse University considered an actor, a comedian, a pro-football star--and ex-US president Bill Clinton, who to our amazement was selected as the finalist. How much longer will it be before the short list for academic commencement speakers will include a porno star, an assassin of abortion opponents, Saddam Hussein, and one of the Beltway killers? For its 2006 commencement, the University chose pop rock star Billy Joel, who had performed a concert on the campus that same year.

American colleges and universities will give honorary degrees to virtually anybody who is prominently in the news. Certainly, all one has to do is be elected as president, vice president or US senator, and offers of honorary degrees--even from the leading universities of the country--will come flooding in. However, even one of Pol Pot's lieutenants involved in genocide in Cambodia, Hun Sen, who later became prime minister--while still all along killing adversaries--was given honorary doctorates by American colleges in California and, of all places, Iowa (Time, 22/3/99).

Even third-rate universities will pay a celebrity speaker \$150,000. Some of these celebrities are actually zeroes, and have no other merits except being (in)famous. The University of Buffalo spent \$702,000 in fees and expenses to bring in 14 speakers to a lecture series (SPS, 26/6/2006).

*Every fall, Syracuse University proudly sends a memo to all faculty and staff, reminding them that the university **never** closes because of bad winter weather. Then came the punishment for this chutzpah: a very bad blizzard that closed everything. Next fall, and thereafter, the letter was more nuanced: the University hardly ever closes.

*Two students, 19 and 22, who just barely managed to graduate with associate degrees in engineering from a minor college near Syracuse promptly announced that they eventually planned to get doctoral degrees from MIT or the California Institute of Technology and become theoretical physicists, which is the doctorate program requiring one of the highest levels of intelligence (SPS, 18/5/02).

*One thinks of so-called community colleges as small places offering mostly 2-year “associate” degrees, but Miami Dade community college has 80,000 students (Wall Street Journal, 4 March 2006; source item from Peter King).

Other Evidence of Collapse/Non-Functionality of Schools

*Newsweek (7 Aug. 2000) rhapsodized that a TV documentary about an American high school was “refreshingly real.” This “reality” revolved to a considerable extent around smoking, boozing, doing drugs, using vulgar language, going deep into porno, and having sex. There was also a focusing on the sensitive football player, the girl whose parents were divorcing, and the nowadays obligatory homosexual youth. If all of this is “refreshingly real,” what would they have said about the Nazis filming an extermination camp? Also, this could convert parents to home schooling!

*In early 2001, a middle-school teacher (of children ages 11-14) discovered two children having oral sex in a public toilet in their school. When about to be sent to the principal for this, the children protested to the teacher that what they were doing “is not sex.” Older teenagers in the school were also emphatic on this point.

*Because US schools are not permitted to “discriminate,” they have to offer to girls what they offer to boys, and vice versa. In a 5th grade class in a NY school, both boys and girls were given a group lesson on feminine hygiene that used a model of female anatomy and a tampon. Parents were outraged, but the superintendent defended it (SPS, 2/2/06). (Presumably when it is time for the

lesson on “contraceptives,” all the children together will see a model of male anatomy and a condom.)

*Even the term “bilingual education” is a fraud in that it constitutes a system of education in which students are taught in their native language rather than in English.

*In 1990, the National Commission on the Role of School and Community in the US issued a report which it titled “Code Blue”--a hospital phrase used to signal a life-threatening situation.

*Columnist Donald Kaul observed (in SHJ, 5 Oct. 1993) that about half of Americans can hardly read and write, even if they are high school graduates. They also cannot make even the simplest kinds of calculation. A large percentage of US residents from other countries have superior skills in English. They were fortunate enough to go to school elsewhere before they came to the US. Kaul proposed making schools voluntary and sending all the rest of the kids to cheap baby-sitting warehouses where they could watch video games. He also noted that about half of the US population believes in creationism (which exercised him enormously), and said that if Sunday school preachers can get people to believe this by having access to them for one hour a week, it is amazing that the school system that has them a good part of five days a week cannot teach them literacy (SHJ, 13/9/93).

*A US Department of Labor report said that by the time US schools get through with their children, only half have the skills to hold jobs in today’s economy (SHJ, 3 July 1991). So much for over 40 years of educational philosophy of schools providing an “education for life.”

*Schools are receiving a rating of fair at best, and often poor, by 63% of Americans, who finally are waking up to this reality (Parade, 16/5/93).

*Because American schools no longer teach civics, about half of Americans cannot name a single specific freedom protected by the Constitution’s First Amendment (SHJ, 9 July 99). Quite possibly, immigrants who take classes for their naturalization may be better informed.

*It was discovered in 1992 that an elementary school in the Syracuse area had been used for 12 years without ever getting a good cleaning. The building had been designed with windows never intended to be opened. This was one of several reasons why the building caused a great number of health problems, and had to be overhauled several times at great expense. This is a very good example of hypertechnologization, and introducing complexities that create more problems than they solve.

*It used to be customary in American high schools and colleges to have the student with the best grades deliver the valedictory address at graduation. More and more schools are abolishing this custom, apparently because it celebrates hierarchality, makes poor students feel bad, and just might hurt their “self-esteem.”

*After New York City decentralized its school district in 1969 (because of racial strife) into 32 districts under their own boards, they became nests of political patronage and criminality. In early 1990, a third were under investigation for charges ranging from embezzlement to drug-dealing (Time, 26/3/90). With school boards and senior administrators setting such an example, we should not be surprised about child criminality.

*By 1989, public schools of Jersey City, New Jersey, had become primarily a way for distributing political patronage money in which the educational function had become irrelevant, and the school system had become so bad that the state could not even measure its badness anymore and declared it educationally bankrupt. In a nearly unprecedented move, the state took over control of the school district and its pupils, and has since made remarkable progress. It is hard to tell whether it is good news or bad news that by 1993, the school system in Newark, New Jersey was in the same shape and the state had to seize it with its 50,000 students. Whether transfer of school control from the local to the state level will really be an improvement in the long run remains to be seen (Newsweek, 23/8/93).

*Once deliberate racial segregation was declared illegal by the US Supreme Court, the single biggest reason for segregation of African-American children in schools was housing segregation, meaning that the African-American population was largely concentrated in racial ghettos. Instead of taking measures to diminish this, the courts decreed that racial mixing in schools must be achieved by cross-busing of children. At one time, children in the US were never bused to school on school buses; then later, only if the way to school was very long, as in rural areas. The new large-scale busing now stands proven as a colossal--and extremely destructive--failure. Schools are still heavily segregated: the violence and other decadences of the ghetto culture have been brought massively into the schools that had little violence; children now have to get up well before daylight and endure hours of bus rides out of their neighborhood, often on buses where violence takes place; neighborhood schools have been abolished; busing has become the single biggest item in the school budget. School busing has become an industry with a vested interest in getting all children bused, even for short distances (e.g., if they live very close to the school), and even if it means they sat on a bus for hours (much longer than it takes to walk), and the busing interests are now so huge and entrenched that it would take an economic depression to revert to neighborhood schools. Also, in the 1990s, parents began to insist on school busing in order to keep their children safe (they thought) from bullying, street gangs, and gunfire on the streets. After Sept. 2001, we saw many more parents than usual bringing their children to school bus stops, and waiting there until the doors of the bus had closed behind their child. Also, at hearings, it came out that distance was no longer an issue with many parents, but the only reason they wanted buses was for safety. What a sign of the times--and of course, only something a wealthy society can afford.

However, parents are finding out that the children are not even safe **on** school buses anymore. There is much bullying on these buses, and some of them working through ghetto areas have gotten hit by stray bullets.

Children in the Syracuse school system have become so uncontrolled and violent that school buses have a hard time keeping the seats functional. The children poke holes through the seats, slash them with knives, and cut the seat belts. Seat covers cost \$9 each, foam seat pads \$10, and seat belts \$1.50--and school taxes are skyrocketing (SHJ, 10 Jan. 1994.) Also, minorities are now harder to integrate than before because (a) there are so many more of them than there were in ca. 1970, and (b) many (maybe most) African-Americans no longer want to be integrated and assimilated.

There is much irony in all this in that massive school busing was first mandated by the courts in order to integrate schools, but as of 2002, schools are more segregated than then. As we keep saying: You cannot integrate schools unless residential areas are integrated; and they won't be as long as "quality of life" conditions in integrated neighborhoods are poor. This is yet one more reason why there seem to be no grounds for hope for the public schools in the US.

*There are cities in the US where huge proportions of public school teachers send their children to private or parochial schools, even as their union trumpets the glories of public education (Newsweek, 20/1/97).

Would anyone deny what an indictment it is that in Chicago, Illinois, the **majority** of the public school teachers, and the superintendent of the school system itself, sent their children to private or parochial schools? (Newsweek, 11/11/96).

In California, the teachers' association has gone to war against a legislative proposal to give families vouchers to let them decide which school to send their children to. And yet public school teachers in California send their own children to private schools at twice the average rate, which is already high at 10%. In other words, teachers themselves have lost faith in public schools (SHJ, 27/9/93).

*US teachers spend hundreds of hours more (73%) in front of their classes than counterparts in other developed countries, but it seems to be doing no good as far as student achievement is concerned (SPS, 20/10/02).

*In Germany, 20% of children have speech disorders, and a third have behavioral problems. Psychic problems and inability to concentrate are making schooling increasingly difficult there. Mondays are the worst school days, after children have sat endless hours over the weekend in front of TVs, video recorders and computers. Teachers themselves are dropping like flies from stress, often externalized into somatic problems, and many have to be put to pasture at a very early age. Many of

them are becoming sick, some chronically so, and many are taking early or disability retirement. One teacher developed a psychogenic allergy to...pupils!

With teachers cracking, coverage of lesson periods has become erratic. In some schools, teachers are only available for 25-50% of specific subject hours. The governments of the various German states are still in a state of denial about this situation (AW, 7 May 1994).

*In Britain, almost a third of new teacher trainees decide not to go into teaching, and established teachers are deserting the profession, all because of the stresses introduced by increasingly dysfunctional children and decreasing teacher discretions in responding to them. Many of the older teachers retire on grounds of ill health suffered from the stresses of teaching (Guardian, 9/9/99; source item from Oxana Metiuk).

At least in those British schools that are urban and deal with poor and minority children, teachers often simply have no time to teach because they have to deal continually with the poorly socialized, wounded, and hateful behavior of the children. Teachers may come home from school so totally exhausted they cannot even read the newspaper anymore. On the one hand, there is anarchy in the school setting, and on the other hand, pressure from government above to do things that are no longer do-able--apparently from quarters that either simply cannot grasp the collapse of the education system, or are not willing to admit what is happening because this would signify the crumbling of the empire.

*Schools becoming dysfunctional, as in North America, is one reason why there has been a dramatic increase in attendance at Jewish day schools in Britain in recent years (source clipping from Victor Levenson).

*Parallel findings are reported from Canada (e.g., Globe & Mail, 1 July 2000), and could probably be cited from yet other countries as well.

There was a Canadian TV show (at least in 2005) about a high school, with much coverage of eating disorders, mental illness, venereal diseases and school shootings. Oh for the good old days of chewing gum in class or running in the hallways!

*We ran across the lyrics to a song "Another Brick in the Wall" by Pink Floyd on an apparently very popular 1979 album, called "The Wall," which ran as follows:

"We don't need no education
We don't need no thought control
No dark sarcasm in the classroom
Teachers leave the kids alone
Hey teachers--leave us kids alone
All in all it's just another brick in the wall
All in all you're just another brick in the wall."

No wonder kids in school no longer learn anything if this is the kind of stuff that gets put into their minds. This could almost have become a theme song for constructionism. This song often went with "The Happiest Days of Our Lives."

When we grew up and went to school
There were certain teachers who would
Hurt the children anyway they could
By pouring their derision upon anything we did
And exposing every weakness
However carefully hidden by the kids
But in the town it was well known
When they got home at night,
Their fat and psychopathic wives
Would thrash them within inches of their lives.

After this, school performance plummeted indeed.

*Here is one parent's report of a 5/2000 visit to a special class for the handicapped: "We found the teacher and her two aides playing cards while the kids in the room were left to wander aimlessly. During our visit, the card game continued." Said another parent: "What needs to happen on a national level is for some US Attorney to take one of these so-called educators and charge them

with conspiracy to deny civil rights, that right being a free and appropriate public education. Sixty months in Leavenworth would be good for 'em" (Mouth, 5/2000).

Denial of the Collapse of Schools

It is amazing that to this very day, liberal writers deny that public schools are in crisis. As one American business leader put it, "America...(is going) down the tubes, and the worse part is...they're all in denial, patting themselves on the back, as the Titanic heads for the iceberg..." (Newsweek, 12 June 2006). However, this is not so amazing if one considers that it is **they** with their false ideologies who created the conditions that produced the crisis. Some of them claim that this is all a "manufactured crisis," meaning manufactured by misinformation rather than by themselves (e.g., syndicated columnist Molly Ivins, SPS, 23/9/00).

Similarly, columnist Ann Landers declared "American schools are not a lost cause" (SHJ, 31/7/92), even as she carried a letter from a totally demoralized teacher in Florida. This reminded us of the Polish national anthem, "Not Yet is Poland Lost Entirely."

One book claims the crisis of our schools is all a hoax (The Manufactured Crisis: Myths, Frauds, and the Attack on American Public Schools, 1995, by Berliner & Biddle), but at least does acknowledge that what is at issue here is once again the kulturkampf between divergent worldviews and value systems, and what they want society to look like.

Miscellaneous

*Schools have **always** consciously taught morals for thousands of years--until the 1960s. Then the modernists came up with the idea that morals derived from religion, and religion should not be taught in public schools, and hence morals should also not be taught. Ever since, schools have been in trouble. Some have tried to teach democracy instead, but the Afro-American culture and its liberal allies shot that down as being the democracy of the oppressors. However, the schools did begin to teach a morality of political correctness and modernism: have sex early and often--but "safe sex," eat the food of cultures other than your own, exalt homosexuality, and give serious consideration to declaring yourself homosexual, etc. Since these moralities are not derived from "religion," they are ok.

Some schools now permit the teaching or promotion of Eastern, pagan, or even Satanic religious concepts, but forbid even a hint of a mentioning of theistic notions, to say nothing of Christianity (NCR, 8 July 2001).

*In the Fall of 2005, a Long Island, NY high school principal cancelled the school's annual Spring prom, citing "the flaunting of affluence,...exaggerated expenses, a pursuit of vanity for vanity's sake--...financial decadence" and its "bacchanalian aspects." It was typical for students to rent party houses, liquor-stocked limousines, and even for the parents to charter boats for a late-night "booze cruise" for their teenage children. While some parents were glad of the school's decision, others responded by trying to organize a prom without the school's sponsorship. Who were these parents, and what was the school? They are **Catholic** parents who pay big tuition to send their children to a **Catholic** school, in order to presumably receive a **Catholic** education! (SPS, 17 Oct. 2005).

Students at one Catholic high school won as a contest prize a concert, but the school cancelled it because of the sexually explicit lyrics of the star performer's songs. Never mind; if the students just wait for graduation, they can attend Catholic colleges where shows such as "The Vagina Monologues" have been become common fare.

*An article in the Educational Researcher (6/95) had the delicious title, "Bounding the Case Within its Context: A Constructivist Approach to Studying the Detracking Reform."

*Bloom, B. S., Engelhart, M. D., Furst, E. J., Hill, W. H., & Krathwohl, D. R. (Eds.). (1956). Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals. Handbook 1: Cognitive domain. New York: David McKay. The above book has been said to have been one of the most influential educational monographs of the 20th century, though most people have probably never heard of it. It constructed a system of classifying educational goals on the basis of a supposed hierarchy of levels of mental processes. One reason why it became so influential is because

educators used it as the foundation for the design of instruction and assessment, and as a way to characterize learning. The authors were taken quite by surprise at the success of their relatively small book that was meant to assist college and university examiners, but suddenly became the basic reference for all educators worldwide.

*Some US high schools used to arrange for school trips abroad during school breaks, but with the various terrorist acts, they have become afraid that they would get sued if something happened, and have ceased their sponsorship. In some cases, parents have gotten together and arranged these trips privately so that the schools do not have any liability (SPS, 20/3/04).

*1500 high school students from 47 countries competed for achievement awards in psychology from the American Psychological Association in 2006. Of the 7 winners, all were female (Monitor, 7/06). Girls rule, boys drool.

*This is a terrible “coincidences” story. Near Syracuse, a 21-year-old man with “learning disabilities,” who was much delayed in school and finally graduated at 20, was riding in a fancy car with a 20-year-old driver and three teenagers. The distracted driver predictably ran a stop sign and turned in front of a “short school bus” holding 5 “special needs children.” The car was totaled, the 4 people in it sent to a hospital, but none of the people in the school bus were hurt. Only a week before, school officials and fire-fighters had practiced a school bus crash (SPS, 14/11/06).

*An 1887 poem that has almost become a nursery rhyme goes as follows:

Monday's child is fair of face,	Friday's child is full of woe,
Tuesday's child is full of grace,	Saturday's child has far to go,
Wednesday's child is loving and giving,	But the child that is born on the Sabbath-day
Thursday's child works hard for a living.	Is brave and bonny, and good and gay.

We possess, or know of, literary works about handicapped children under the titles “Tuesday's Child,” “Wednesday's Child,” “Thursday's Child,” and “Friday's Child.” (The other days are still waiting for authors.) In 1997, a magazine was founded entitled Tuesday's Child Magazine out of Fort Collins, Colorado, aimed mostly at parents with retarded children.

*By accident, we have discovered what appears to constitute one of the few coherent models of education for children said to be “autistic” that is actually based on universal pedagogic principles, and is consistent in many respects with normalization and SRV. It is called “daily life therapy,” and was invented by a Japanese kindergarten teacher, Kiyo Kitahara. The model emphasizes incorporation of autistic children (who are **not** allowed to be on mind drugs) into schools and classes with ordinary youngsters; imitation of the non-handicapped children by the autistic ones; routine, regularity, and orderliness of life; and physical exercise, development, and competency. While the model may have shortcomings, it appears to be very promising in many respects. She has a 3-volume publication on it in English: Kitahara, K. (1984). Daily life therapy: A method of educating autistic children. Boston: Nimrod Press. In some ways, Kitahara reminds one of Maria Montessori.

*While we are not fans of computer firm mogul Bill Gates, we greatly admire a speech that he gave to a high school graduating class. The speech was about 11 things pupils did not, and will not, learn in school:

“Rule 1: Life is not fair--get used to it.

Rule 2: The world won't care about your self-esteem. The world will expect you to accomplish something BEFORE you feel good about yourself.

Rule 3: You will NOT make \$40,000 a year right out of high school. You won't be vice-president with a car phone until you earn both.

Rule 4: If you think your teacher is tough, wait till you get a boss.

Rule 5: Flipping burgers is not beneath your dignity. Your grandparents had a different word for burger flipping--they called it opportunity.

Rule 6: If you mess up, it's not your parents' fault, so don't whine about your mistakes, learn from them.

Rule 7: Before you were born, your parents weren't as boring as they are now. They got that way from paying your bills, cleaning your clothes and listening to you talk about how cool you are. So, before you save the rain forest from the parasites of your parents' generation, try delousing the closet in your room.

Rule 8: Your school may have done away with winners and losers, but life has not. In some schools, they have abolished failing grades and they'll give you as many times as you want to get the right answer. This doesn't bear the slightest resemblance to ANYTHING in real life.

Rule 9: Life is not divided into semesters. You don't get summers off and very few employers are interested in helping you find yourself. Do that on your own time.

Rule 10: Television is NOT real life. In real life people actually have to leave the coffee shop and go to jobs.

Rule 11: Be nice to nerds. Chances are you'll end up working for one."

*According to one US survey, disaffected teachers said that there were 4 things that were important to them about their jobs: motivated children, supportive administrators, talented colleagues, and identification with a school's mission--whatever that may mean (Newsweek, 12 June 2000).

*Many media may not have covered it, but the US Southern Baptist Convention has been considering a mass "exit strategy" from the public school system. We are all for it, and that "no child be left behind" but the children of the liberals and the politically correct. Unfortunately, this would once more punish the victims (the children) instead of their parents who deserve it.

Update on the Gulf Coast Hurricane Disasters of 2005

As this issue of TIPS is being prepared, hurricane season 2006 has begun (it starts in late summer). Unfortunately, the recovery from the 2005 hurricanes has been very slow, hampered by bureaucracy, incompetence, and outright corruption.

What neither the people of the Gulf Coast, nor the rest of the US, have yet confronted is that the hurricanes merely revealed some long-standing and very deep problems in that area--problems that may not be fixable no matter how much money is poured into the area, because the problems do not derive from lack of money. For instance, New Orleans specifically has such a long history of corruption (in government, police, schools) and decadence (both in the quarters that appeal to tourists and among its poor) that giving money to New Orleans is like giving drink to an alcoholic. No sooner had the two Gulf hurricanes blown over when word went out in Louisiana that friends of state officials were going to be the first ones to get reconstruction sub-contracts (Newsweek, 26/9/05). (This is not necessarily the case with other locales along the Gulf that were also hard-hit by the hurricanes.) For instance, the governor of Mississippi had his TV sets on as he was working during Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath, watching the scenes from Louisiana, and said "I don't want to make comparisons, all I'll say is we want people to know that in Mississippi, things *work*." The fact is that there was very little of the chaos and social breakdown in the hurricane-hit areas of Mississippi compared to those in Louisiana, perhaps in part because the poor population of Mississippi is not as urbanized as that in New Orleans (Newsweek, 26/9/05).

The items in this section continue our coverage and interpretation of the meaning of the hurricanes and the response to them.

*One of the first businesses to re-open in the New Orleans French Quarter after Katrina was a strip club, and during Hurricane Rita it was the only such open business (Time, 3 Oct. 2005).

*Disasters are wonderful opportunities for fraud and all sorts of cheating, because of the tremendous sums of money that become available and are poured into disaster areas. For instance, after Sept. 11, 2001, an estimated "tens of thousands" of New Yorkers scammed free air conditioners, vacuum cleaners, and air purifiers from the government, to the tune of \$100 million (SPS 13 July 2006). In New Orleans, as much as one-and-a-half **billion** dollars of taxpayer money was misspent, e.g., for vacations, jewelry, football tickets, porn products, tattoos, and even at least one sex change operation, to prisoners who had stolen other people's social security numbers, etc. (SPS, 14 June 2006). Of course, this continued a long New Orleans tradition of corruption, e.g., among its politicians.

In all PPP societies, disasters are an economic gold mine for large sectors of the economy, and this was also the case with the Gulf Coast hurricane disasters. Vultures from all over the US converged upon the area to grab their piece of one of the biggest reconstruction projects ever in US history, and also to exploit the incompetence of FEMA in awarding the work projects (Newsweek, 26/9/05).

An estimated 100,000 refrigerators had to be junked in the Gulf disaster. A windfall for icebox-makers! (Newsweek, 16/12/2005).

Reconstruction of the Gulf area is estimated to cost several hundred billion dollars, and will be financed mostly by borrowing money from foreign lenders, ironically including the central banks of China even though China itself is still a pretty backward and not very wealthy country. The same kind of borrowing is also paying for the war in Iraq, as well as for the recent and prospective tax cuts. This also means that for 2005, the US would be paying \$350 billion in interest alone on its debt load, which will rise very steeply with each successive year, predicted to reach \$426 billion at the very least in 2007. Ironically, the recent cut in social spending, while it hurts a lot of poor people, will save only a drop in the bucket. Economist Allan Sloan said that one of these days, we will have one disaster or unexpected problem too many, and the foreign financial markets will no longer lend money, and the US economy will go bust (Newsweek, 26/9/05).

*When San Francisco was destroyed by the 1906 earthquake and subsequent fire, one characteristic it shared with New Orleans was that already then, there was much decadence in the city, and its government was corrupt. However, what was different was that already within an hour after the first earthquake wave, rescue and emergency response operations were beginning to be organized. Almost immediately, the US Army organized itself for rescue on a large-scale basis, and Navy ships were immediately called in for assistance. (However, once more remindful of New Orleans, some of the soldiers themselves were found to be looting.) Relief was also launched from all over the country within hours, even though the city was cut-off from its communication lines.

*The imperial and PPP nature (rather than helping nature) of the Federal Emergency Management Administration was strikingly revealed by its response to the hurricanes and floods.

In consequence of Hurricane Katrina, someone designed an award-winning 300 square foot "Katrina Cottage" that actually looks like a southern house with a generous front porch, as an alternative to the flimsy trailers that FEMA routinely provided for disaster victims. Even though it is cost-competitive with trailers, and got rave reviews, FEMA rejected it--because it was too good, and might be used by people on a permanent basis, and FEMA's own rules allow only temporary housing! (B&C, 7/06). And yet, some of the trailers that were delivered to house the homeless proved to be so poorly built as to be uninhabitable (Newsweek, 26/9/05).

When Doctors Without Borders arrived in New Orleans to help out, FEMA told them that they could not minister to victims lying moaning on the ground at the airport because the doctors were not FEMA-certified! (Newsweek, 26/12/2005).

We have a perfectly good explanation as to why FEMA failed in the Louisiana disaster and elsewhere. An organization genuinely oriented to dealing with disasters would always be on hair-trigger alert to prove its mettle, much as the military always looks forward to a "good war" where it can show what it can do and test out its latest weapon toys. The problem is that FEMA was never set up to deal with disasters, but rather, to provide sinecures to people whom people in government wanted to reward. Accordingly, the last thing that FEMA wants, and is prepared for, is a disaster, because any disaster whatever would show up its incompetence. This also helps explain why it kept denying for days that there was a disaster in the Gulf area.

Chertoff who replaced the ineffectual martinet Brown at FEMA still didn't quite "get it." He said that the government needed to get better prepared "for panic," rather than for disasters that cause panic (Newsweek, 26/12/2005).

*Even under less than disaster conditions, human services in our society have increasingly been expected to make up for societal decadence and collapse, as documented in an earlier section of this TIPS issue. For instance, the schools have had to take on more of the responsibilities that used to be carried out by functional parents, families, and communities, and this is one of the reasons why schools are failing at what they were initially supposed to do, namely, educating children. When disaster conditions hit, health services can get overwhelmed, and remain that way for a long time. Now, because of the flooding, standing water, sewage-contaminated water, mold, etc. in the hurricane-ravaged regions, public health conditions are poor, some hospitals have yet to re-open, and those that are open are under-staffed and space is at a premium (multiple sources).

*As we stress in our teaching, and as past issues of TIPS have repeatedly emphasized, if one understands a culture, then one will also understand the people in that culture (what they will want

and do, how they will respond to challenges) and that culture's human services. Thus, given the values in our culture (as extensively documented in many past issues of TIPS), and given the stresses brought by the hurricanes, it had to be expected that people who were seen as burdensome would be killed--and one could have known that this must have happened even without having hard evidence of it. But now, such evidence has been uncovered, showing both that severely ill and elderly people were killed, that elderly nursing home residents were abandoned to die in the flooding, and that abortion mills offered free abortions as "aid" to those hit by the hurricane (multiple news sources).

However, one heartwarming good news was that some African-American and mostly poor attendants at nursing homes and hospitals risked everything by staying with their debilitated Caucasian patients as these were being moved about (Newsweek, 26/12/2005).

*People who died of the aftermath of Katrina, rather than during Katrina itself, were not counted in the official death toll (AP, in SPS, 12/12/2005).

Furthermore, as of January 2006, over 3,000 people were still missing, and as of late summer 2006, bodies were still being found.

*Already even before the hurricanes, the New Orleans public school system had been "a cesspool of corruption...that made local schools among the worst in the country" as even Newsweek (26/12/2005) said, ranking very low in student performance, and with \$69 million in federal aid being mysteriously unaccounted for just in 2005. The Federal Bureau of Investigation even had a field office at New Orleans school district headquarters. Almost all of the public schools are being replaced by charter schools with supposedly real accountability (Time, 6 March 2006).

*Already hours **before** Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, the Disaster Response Network of the American Psychological Association (APA), which collaborates with the American Red Cross, had been activated. Amazingly, psychologists were among some of the first emergency people on the scene, putting to shame any number of other parties and the government, and for once they did not merely dish out empty psychobabble talk as they usually do, but at least some of them were pressed into practical assistance by the extremity of the situation. However, others could not change their spots and emphasized "listening to people's stories," made children draw pictures "to process their emotions," etc.

One new twist is that such APA responders are supposed to "boost people's resilience," which is yet another example of where this resilience craze is going, because initially, resilience was said to be something that people either had or didn't have, rather than something that other people could pump up in a person in a matter of minutes (Monitor on Psychology, 12/05).

*One New Orleans refugee sent to a relocation camp in Massachusetts arrived with one of his most precious possessions, namely a large sack full of bottles of hot sauces (Monitor on Psychology, 12/05).

*One report we read repeatedly was that many of the refugees from New Orleans themselves thought that God had smitten the area because of its "unrighteous culture."

Even before Hurricane Katrina, residents in some New Orleans neighborhoods had said that they were overwhelmed by violent crime, and that they wanted to leave. As one resident said, "everything was falling apart" (AP, in SPS, 2 Dec. 2005). The problem is that now, the violent and criminal types are scattered rather than concentrated together, "where they belong." Another problem is that there are many equally corrupt, decadent, violent and nonfunctional neighborhoods (and even towns) in other parts of the US.

*In 6/06, National Guard troops had to be sent **once more** to New Orleans, because as its population began to return, so did the crime wave, and local and state police either could not cope with it, or could not be trusted.

New Orleans has been so lawless, and is now "regaining" crime as people keep drifting back in, that it had to fly in a planeload of prosecutors so as to process as many as 6000 (!) defendants.

*More than 2000 registered sex offenders were dispersed from the Gulf region all over the country in the wake of Katrina. It is believed that many of these will take this opportunity to escape surveillance, and will resume their compulsive sex acts (AP in SPS, 31/12/2005).

*Wherever the people of New Orleans were evacuated to, and no matter how much consideration and generosity was given to them, instead of showing gratitude, they soon brought trouble, especially cheating, refusing to take employment, violence and murder. This has come out in one news report after another. This has been a very expensive and troublesome burden on the police departments in the host cities that accepted large numbers of refugees, such as Houston. One difference is that in New Orleans, criminals were routinely let out of jail (in part because of judicial corruption and “diversity” celebration), while cities like Houston keep theirs locked up (Time, 23/5/2006). This tells us a lot about how entire populations in certain areas can become immoral predators, and unable to live the life of a liberal democracy.

*Some evacuated families are planning to sue because they got temporarily separated during the rescue. “Someone’s gonna pay” muttered one woman. And shyster lawyers descended like a plague, posting notices to get people to sue (Newsweek, 26/12/2005).

*As cars were speeding in and out of New Orleans on the one remaining Interstate, 75 empty buses were idling on a lot just outside the city. Why? They had been told that the highway was out of service. However, users of the highway who slowed down, or tried to be good Samaritans by stopping to pick up a refugee, tended to lose their cars to the mob or the people they tried to help (Newsweek, 26/12/2005).

*Looters formed convoys of cars that drove around on the high ground with ghetto-blasters blasting at top sound levels (Newsweek, 26/12/2005).

During Hurricane Rita that followed Hurricane Katrina, police in New Orleans arrested a lot of looters and carjackers, some of them carrying guns and impersonating police officers.

In connection with Hurricane Rita, people along the roadways were fighting with knives over gas (Time, 3 Oct. 2005).

*Here is one thing we learned about how to protect one’s property during civic breakdowns. One gathers the broken glass that is usually plentiful (or one “makes” it oneself), and scatters it on the surrounding ground, sidewalk, driveway, porch, etc., because when anyone walks on it at night, one can hear them.

*When Hurricane Rita was predicted to follow Hurricane Katrina, a lot of mothers in the New Orleans area told their children to go out on the playgrounds and play as hard as they could so that they would be worn out in case they would become homebound for a few days. Also, condoms quickly became a top seller in the stores (Time, 3 Oct. 2005).

*Continuing our coverage of the “language wars” about devalued conditions and people (as covered in the special quadruple issue of TIPS, April/June/August/October 1997), people displaced by Hurricane Katrina object to being referred to as “refugees” and want to be called “evacuees” instead (SPS, 30 July 2006).

*Bit-by-bit, even the PC media have come around to talking gingerly of New Orleans’ “cultural flaws” even before the 2005 hurricane, and that these flaws may also “undermine the city’s renewal” (e.g., Newsweek, 26/12/2005). Among these, it listed never-ending feuds and divisions, even within the African-American community itself, including the lighter- and darker-skinned classes set against each other. That was also one reason why during the crisis, there was such poor communication.

One Louisiana leader said that New Orleans cannot be returned to normal, because normal was awful (Newsweek, 26/12/2005).

*A further sad commentary on New Orleans is that other communities quickly began to draw up rational plans for rebuilding, but not New Orleans. In fact, it virtually abolished its planning office after Hurricane Katrina, and there is hardly any advocacy for rebuilding the Wetlands that would have given the city a lot of protection from the sea. Apparently, it just wants more of the same as it got from Katrina (Time, 28/8/2006).

*There has not been a federal law about evacuation of the sick, elderly, handicapped or poor during local or regional emergencies--but Congress did triumphantly pass laws requiring planning for evacuation of pets (Time, 28/8/2006).

*Reading people's letters to editors about Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath, one is struck by how many feel that the disaster was in large part human-made, i.e., in part a consequence of permitting the protective wetlands to be destroyed--and now trying to rebuild on the same unprotectable ground as before. One reader said, "I just don't feel obligated to pay for it." Others are put off by decadence resuming exactly where it left off, and survivors showing no sense of gratitude for having survived.

*The impression we got from all the media is that the conservatives do not want those parts of New Orleans rebuilt that might be flooded again (this includes much of the area where the poor had lived), while the liberals do. We further get the impression that many liberals are in love with New Orleans **because** it is so decadent, and embodies the liberal self-centered sensualistic (im)morality; and they want it to continue being decadent.

Miscellaneous Health & Health Care News

*Some news is so catastrophic that it simply does not register with people. The news about the human papilloma-virus (HPV) is of this nature. HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the US. Of all "sexually active" women, 80%(!) will be exposed to it. Most get over it, but in a minority, the virus persists. It causes cervical cancer, which is the second-most common cancer in women (Newsweek, 19/6/2006). HPV is also the only sexually transmitted infection (STI) that takes place skin-to-skin, but not via bodily fluids, as do all other STIs. It therefore does not require penetrative intercourse, but can be passed on through touch. One can also get it onto one's fingers, and then give it to oneself by poor hygiene. Much "educational" information on this is deceptive, including that condoms will prevent it (Scientific American, 6/2006).

There is now huge hype about the new vaccine Gardasil, that allegedly offers close to 100% protection from HPV, and there is a move underway to make it mandatory for girls aged 11-12, and to exclude from school girls whose parents resist. One force behind this move is the pro-sex lobby (i.e., start having sex early, have it often, with many partners, but "practice safe sex"). The other force is the drug industry. A course of 3 shots over 6 months costs \$360, making this one of the most expensive vaccines on the market. Merck, which makes it, would earn about \$1 billion a year in the US alone. There is even a push on to make tests mandatory for boys--another \$1 billion plus a year (miscellaneous 2006 clippings).

Related to all the above is that of **all** pregnant women in the US, 35% are already infected with the herpes 2 virus that is almost always transmitted sexually (SPS, 26/6/2006). Modernism's answer: have even more promiscuous sex, but just use condoms!

*Until recently, cochlear implants to restore hearing were only done on young children. Now, the operation is being performed on older people as well whose hearing has deteriorated. In fact, doctors claim they can enhance hearing in 80% of the hearing-impaired, even in children who were born deaf, though the latter must be treated before they are 5 years old (Newsweek, 24 June 2002).

*When dancing manias broke out in medieval Europe, probably as a result of ergot (related to LSD) poisoning of grains, a major treatment was to help the afflicted dance away their mania, rather than channeling it in destructive ways. That is why the Tarantella music and dance was invented. Now, someone in the Ivory Coast in Africa has invented a Bird Flu dance in which people shake, flap their arms, and cluck, in imitation of the death throes of the birds who get mass slaughtered to prevent the spread of the disease. Like wildfire, the dance spread worldwide (SPS, 13/6/2006). We hope the dancers will remember the "dance steps" when this flu becomes a human epidemic.

*South America's red "fire ants" arrived in the US in the 1930s, and are beginning to be a problem in nursing homes--especially in the Southeastern states--where they attack helpless residents. In turn, this leads to lucrative lawsuits; one award was \$5.3 million (AARP Bulletin, 7/2006).

*We told you so! A devastating blow was struck by the state of Missouri against 340,000 of its handicapped people. As of 9/05, Missouri Medicaid will no longer pay for a large number of supports needed by handicapped people to function, or even to survive, ranging from canes, crutches, and walkers, to wheelchair batteries to feeding tubes, nutritional formulas, and breathing equipment. All this is now "optional," and requires elephantine application and appeals processes. Almost all of the early appeals were denied.

This may be one of the opening salvos of a terrible cut-back not only of services and living supports to dependent people, but of their very life supports!

*In our last issue, we reported on the US government's awful program called Plan D of Medicare, that supposedly enabled the elderly to get financial coverage for their drugs, but that actually prevented many of them from doing so. Several states have declared public health emergencies, due to the insanity of the program, the fact that it overwhelmed the capacity of so many elderly people who could not figure it out, and the fact that it stopped paying for drugs that had formerly been covered, among other things (SPS, 16 January 2006).

*In 1987, the TIPS editor published the first edition of The New Genocide of Handicapped and Afflicted People, which contained a 22-page appendix on how to protect handicapped people if they had to go to a hospital. This appendix pointed out the dangers of hospitalization, both from the possible negative attitudes of staff, and the complexity of contemporary hospital medicine. In 1992, when the 2nd edition of The New Genocide was issued, that appendix was expanded and published as a separate 81-page monograph, entitled A Guideline on Protecting the Health & Lives of Patients in Hospitals, Especially if the Patient is a Member of a Societally Devalued Class. In conjunction with its publication, the Training Institute--and later some of its associates (such as Jo Massarelli and Joe Osburn)--began to teach about the dangers of hospitalization and how to protect hospitalized patients. This teaching was not popular, and in fact, it sometimes elicited intense objections and hostility (e.g., from hospital and nursing personnel), who denied that hospitals were dangerous places. In 2005, the TIPS editor revised and republished, in a 2nd lengthier edition (106 pages), the hospital guidelines again. Now, on May 1, 2006, a lengthy cover story of Time magazine--based largely on several large research studies that appeared over the previous 5-10 years, that documented dangers of infection, maiming, and death to patients--detailed many of the dangers of hospitals even to physicians and their family members who became patients. One high-placed physician found that when his wife was in a top hospital for 2 weeks, not a single day passed without at least one medication error, and he found himself virtually powerless to stop unnecessary tests, repeated tests that were not needed, misreading of data, lost information, etc., etc. The article also stated--as we had always done--the importance of having a protector with a patient at all times. On the one hand, we are glad that people are waking up to the reality, and hope (probably hopelessly) that this will generate many sales of our hospital protection book. On the other hand, this is yet one more example of the burden of seeing something bad coming down the pike well before most other people do, and being castigated and punished for it. So often, the TIPS editor has the sad satisfaction of being proved right in the end, but being right is never forgiven.

As announced in an earlier issue of TIPS, the revised 2nd edition of the monograph A Guideline on Protecting the Health & Lives of Patients in Hospitals, Especially if the Patient is a Member of a Societally Devalued Class, is available from the Training Institute for \$10 per copy, plus shipping and handling (single copies \$2.00; multiple copies 15% to North American addresses, 20% to all other addresses). Quantity discounts are available.

*For years now, we have heard of the high rate of medical misadventures in hospitals, but we are rarely told that many hospitals cheat in reporting on medical errors and other misadventures.

*At just one single hospital in Quebec, 100 patients died over an 18-month period from an increasingly antibiotic-resistant bacterium, clostridium difficile. It is transmitted through feces, and thus bad toilet hygiene, from cleaning toilets, or from the proverbial toilet seats. The bacterium has also begun to be found in healthy people. We keep noting all the time that people do not know--or even want to know--that healthy people can infect immune-deficient people with their germs. Even washing one's hands with anti-bacterial soap may not eliminate all of these germs (Worcester T&G, 2 Dec. 2005).

*We only kill here. As we keep saying--but no one seems to be listening or hearing--the signs of PC persecution of dissenters are rapidly increasing. An abortion-performing hospital in England announced that it would not accept a 74-year-old man as a patient because he had earlier sent it graphic pictures of aborted babies (NCR, 18/6/2004).

*Yet another sign of the times, of societal breakdown, and of efforts at technological address of a problem: hospitals are very busy places, with a lot of coming and going of people. In very recent years, all hospital staff began to be required to wear at all times some type of photo ID--it is important to remember that until only a few years ago, **staff did not use to do this**. Now, because patients in hospitals have been harmed by both visitors who know them (e.g., in Syracuse, one man poisoned his very ill wife, one teenager was raped by an acquaintance of her hospital roommate), and by strangers (e.g., patients have been sexually assaulted by people who roam the halls looking for opportunity), and because some people try to steal the drugs and other medical supplies that hospitals keep in huge quantities, some hospitals are now instituting security measures for **everyone** who enters a hospital. Patients are issued identifying wrist tags when they are admitted, staff have to wear IDs (as noted above)--and now every single person who enters a hospital will have to show photo identification, be issued a visitor pass, and **wear** and show **it at all times**. The ID tag for visitors is to be made on the spot by computer scanning of photo ID provided by the person being identified.

Further, several hospital entrances will no longer be available for public use. Staff will now use special dedicated entrances and exits, separate from those used by everyone else. Security forces will patrol the hospital, and anyone without the proper ID will be "dealt with."

This introduces yet more complexity and bureaucracy to the process of visiting someone in the hospital--not to mention that, as noted, some of the acts to which this new procedure is a response have been committed by people who would have no trouble gaining access to the hospital even under this new procedure, and still carrying out whatever mischief they had planned.

In Syracuse, where one hospital is instituting this policy as of March 2006, there are more than 1200 people who visit the hospital each day. In other locales, and at larger hospitals, the number is apt to be much larger. One can only imagine the gridlock that could occur at certain times in the hospital entrance once this policy is implemented (source item Syracuse Post-Standard, 28 February 2006).

Among other things, this will also wreak havoc with the situation of many already vulnerable hospitalized people, where scores of people may be needed to provide helpful presence to them round-the-clock during their hospital stay, and with those lowly people whose likely visitors may not have any photo identification, such as some of the homeless. Also, among other things, this is also one more step in the creeping increase of surveillance in our society, where fewer and fewer movements of anyone can anymore be kept secret.

*The new feel-good code word for referring to deadly diseases, but without naming the diseases is "life-changing conditions." Thus, HIV, AIDS, and cancers are now all called "life-changing conditions," and there are books, trainings, and consultant-vultures on how to live with "life-changing conditions."

*Where is the highest concentration of HIV and hepatitis C in North America? In idyllic Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. This is also where local authorities provide free heroin injections as part of a research project (Time, 20/3/2006). We predict that this may prevent cases of HIV and hepatitis, but increase heroin addiction. It reminds us of "driving the devil out with Beelzebul."

Miscellaneous Other Human Service News

*A major--relatively new--mindless idiomatic mantra in human services, and apparently especially the ones obsessed with personal service/futures planning, is "the person's valued outcome." So--and we kid you not!--we find people talking in terms of "valued outcomes," such as "pharmacological management," "reassessment/intervention," "shopping and spending money," "trim toenails," etc.

*A recent website entry warned people that there must be a big problem with Social Role Valorization considering how misogynistic its creator is. More fodder for anti-SRV and anti-TIPS editor cannons.

*In Germany, prostitution is legal, but it is still staggering to contemplate that an estimated 400,000 prostitutes (many of them under age) were believed to be servicing the masses congregating in 12 German cities for the world soccer championship in Summer 2006. Of these, 40,000 are believed to be specially imported from Eastern Europe, many of them forced. In some cup game cities, sex huts were set up. A new brothel in Berlin can accommodate 650 men at a time. A woman costs less than a ticket to a cup game.

However, at the same time, there were more than 200 nuns reportedly ministering to these 400,000 women.

*Here is a remarkable phenomenon that is either a historical revisionism, or a small revolution. For the first time ever, we saw the Special Olympics described thusly (SPS, 8 July 2006): "It is a year-round sports organization that promotes inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities." For decades, Special Olympics has held athletic competitions (often not very real) for groups of retarded persons, the only integrators being the mostly adult volunteers who made the arrangements, supervised the activities, etc. Has "inclusion" now been written into the Special Olympics because it is the craze, and everyone constantly mouths it?

*Wolfensberger's Pedagogic Rule No. 312 (7/2005): Never put a microphone in front of a person with Down's syndrome! (because, at least these days, and in part because of their exposure to the media, craving for attention and valued roles, and getting reinforced for it, such persons will begin to enact the fool-entertainer role, and won't know when to quit).

*Between 2002 and 2004, total inflation-adjusted federal, state and local spending on "Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities" in the US increased by 5.7%, which was interpreted as a decrease in the increase. However, broken down by states (and DC), 11 had an out-and-out decrease, the biggest being 9.6% in Oklahoma (MR, 2/2006).

*Who would have thought that the Devereux School, started long ago in Pennsylvania as an expensive private institution for handicapped youths (now called the Devereux Foundation), has allegedly become the largest private provider of "behavioral health services" for children and adults in the US? (10 Feb. 2006 clipping).

*At its peak, TASH (formerly The Association for Persons With Severe Handicaps) had an amazing 8000 members, and drew 2500 members to its annual conferences--more than attended the American Association on Mental Retardation conferences. By 2005, it was down to about 2800 members, and drew 1380 to its annual conference. Who can explain such large changes?

*Finally, a book has been written entitled Ritalin is Not the Answer: A Drug-Free, Practical Program for Children Diagnosed With ADD or ADHD. Its psychologist author, David Stein, first debunks the idea that these conditions are a disease (as the US National Institute of Health claims), and also exposes the severe adverse effects of the drugs that such children are typically placed on. He also points out that there is really no single psychological, medical, or combined test sufficient to render a diagnosis of this condition. He then gives practical child-rearing advice relevant to the behaviors at issue.

*For May 2000, a conference incongruently and jarringly entitled "Celebrating Learning Disability" was scheduled to take place at the University of Hull in England. While conferences celebrating AIDS have long been customary, we are still waiting for conferences on "Celebrating Alzheimer's," "Celebrating the Bubonic Plague," etc.

*We never cease to be amused at what some human service training vultures are promising to teach to their workshop participants. A flyer that we received in 8/03 promised that in a single 9:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. day, with an hour out for lunch, attendees would "learn" all of the following: how to change behaviors such as physical outbursts/aggression (hitting, kicking, biting, spitting, etc.),

verbal outbursts, property destruction, non-compliance, self injury; recognize warning signs, avoid power struggles; use personal space and body language to de-escalate potential crises; recognize the function of behaviors, decrease disruptive behaviors, increase appropriate behaviors; find out where to start working on a behavior, keep track of the behaviors with a minimum of paperwork; find out what reinforcers really work, use the five rules for reinforcers; find out how the setting (group home, facility, community residence, work, etc.) is helping to increase or decrease the disruptive behavior.

This workshop was being given in 5 major Eastern cities, at \$129 per attendee.

We draw interested parties' attention to the flyer enclosed with this issue of TIPS on the Training Institute's upcoming 1-day workshop on the Dynamics of Violence in Human Services (December 1, 2006)--at only \$80 per person (group discounts available), and where an entirely different and, we think, more promising approach will be taken.

Miscellaneous Other News & Signs of the Times

*Some kinds of psychologists have come to be called "cognitivists," apparently in parallel to "behaviorists." Only a few decades ago, university psychology departments began to hire a whole wave of behaviorists, and behaviorism seemed to be the enduring wave of the future. However, once "cognitive" psychology arrived, behaviorism began to fade in academia, and in some departments it only has a vestigial presence, if any. The major reason for the rise of so-called cognitive psychology was the reinterpretation of the mind as a computer, and the equation of mental functioning with "information processing." As with innumerable schools of psychology before, we suspect that this craze will play itself out once not only its strength but also its limitations and boundaries have become clearer, though it is not apparent at this time what a potential successor might be a few decades from now.

*The cover story of the 6 January 2003 **double issue** of Newsweek was about the "Matrix" films, and mostly Matrix II and III. Not only was that whole topic a great mystery to us, and why it should receive such super-prominent publicity in a news magazine, but we noted that not one word was said about the first Matrix film having been one of the major inspirations of the two mass killer students of Columbine high school in Littleton, Colorado.

*Bivins, J. C. (2003). The fracture of good order. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press. In our teaching, we often invoke the construct of "the empire," i.e., the controlling forces and entities not only in politics, but also in culture, organizations, etc. A writer by the name of Jason Bivins came up with a similar construct that he calls "Leviathan." He sees it in the alliance between the federal bureaucracy, corporate capitalism, and secular culture, and especially in the military-industrial alliance of corporate munitions-making, and the Pentagon. He asseverates that the growth of state power has increasingly limited democratic participation. He also believes that the attempt to consign "religion" to the private sphere is an attempt to render it irrelevant, while giving ever more power to professional and managerial expertise.

One of the big differences with our empire construct is that we see empire-ism as a universal, existing in all societies at all times, and expressing itself in surprisingly similar ways in them regardless of cultural differences.

*A new political party, called Charity, Freedom and Diversity, has been set up in the Netherlands to effect laws that would remove all legal obstacles to child pornography, sex with or between children, and sex with animals. However, an interim goal (we would call it a slippery slope) is to reduce the age of consent (for sex) to 12. Apparently, the party is being founded by pedophiles, but we suspect that many of them are merely homosexuals who want sex with adolescents (Calgary Sun, early June, 2006).

*It has been drawn to our attention by John Armstrong (and now we can see it ourselves) that the people of the culture of modernism--having been profoundly (though largely unconsciously) brainwashed by modernism, so-called post-modernism, and political correctness--can no longer distinguish empirical facts and realities from their own emotions and subjective opinions. Accordingly, they will react to statements of empirical fact (e.g., anal sex is unhealthy; not every impaired person is capable of indicating their desires) as if they were ideological positions. Particularly apt to be treated as ideological opinions, attitudes or values are empirical statements on

issues that are currently very contested, e.g., the statements that abortion ends the life of a developing human being; that every fully developed human being began life as first one cell, then a small collection thereof; that things have reality, regardless of how one wants to talk about them, or what one wants to call them; that people can be both oppressed and decadent, nasty, and wrong--all these statements are apt to elicit ideological objections to their validity because they deal with current "hot-button" issues. All the research for several decades has shown that homosexual people have more mental problems and more health problems than non-homosexual ones, but if one said this, one is almost certain to be accused of "homophobia." The research has shown that women assault men at least as often as vice versa, but hardly anyone dares mention it lest they be accused of some awful no-no, such as patriarchy, misogyny, etc.

*The people of modernism keep fewer and fewer of their promises, because modernism does not prepare people to endure hardship, and when keeping a promise entails inconvenience or outright suffering, people just decide they do not have to keep that promise. After all, there is no God (according to modernists) who says one should keep one's promises, or God doesn't really care or mind, and one can just decide that one "didn't really mean it." Thus, a startling new development in modern wedding ceremonies is to ask the couple, **after** they have exchanged their vows, "Do you promise to keep these promises you have just made?," to which the couple responds "I do"--but if the couple are prepared to break their vows, they are presumably also prepared to break this after-promise as well.

*An interesting thing about the effort on behalf of immigration law reform in the US is that over the years, there were protest rallies about the proposed new laws--and almost all the protestors were either illegal immigrants themselves, or their American-born children. Most **legal** immigrants do **not** approve of illegal immigration, and few seem to participate in these rallies. Yet these demonstrations so scared the politicians that they revised their legal proposals. Where illegal immigrants become such a large group as to influence the political process, something has gone seriously wrong. It is also alarming that the protestors at these rallies wave foreign flags! This is a frontal challenge to long-standing American tradition that if you want to become an American, you must give up your old and former allegiances. The oath of citizenship long included a clause of "abjuring foreign potentates," and who these were had to be specifically mentioned.

*Mintz, F. S. (1923). The new American citizen: A reader for foreigners. New York: Macmillan. At a time when the liberal intelligentsia in US academia have decreed that neither children in high school nor college students should ever have a course in civics, government, or American history, it should not be surprising that immigrants to the US receive hardly any of the citizenship orientation and education that they used to get at one time. This little 1923 book was written as a primer for immigrants, using simple language, large print, and pictures on virtually every page, allowing for the fact that many immigrants at that time were not very literate. It covered American history, the organization of the American government, how cities are governed, a geography of the US, the five then common national songs, major trades and occupations in the US, and interesting short stories apparently meant to improve the reader's English.

*Here is what can happen with open borders. In a Berlin high school, 90% of the pupils speak mother tongues other than German! In 2005, the school decided that henceforth, only German was to be spoken in the school. Even the parents agreed that there had to be one tongue that all pupils should be able to share (5/06 clipping from Susanne Hartfiel).

*This is what happens when one indiscriminately lets in a significant foreign Muslim minority. In the Netherlands, the Islamic minority has begun to dominate and terrorize the majority population, though our PC media would hardly tell you. People are beginning to hide from Muslims; university professors sleep under police protection, Parliament members often sleep on army buses. Participants at a conference on Islam gather under false names and stay in hotels guarded by security services (VOM, 7/2006). Europe is shuffling back into the darkness that it took thousands of years to come out of. It does not have the will to resist its enemies who want to bring it down.

*So it seems hardly anybody outside the US wants to be a resident and citizen of their own country. Only 34% of the French do, and a mere 21% of Germans and Spaniards (Newsweek,

29/5/2006). They ruin their own countries, badmouth America--and then want to go there to live. Half of Africans probably want to come, maybe 300 million Indians, a billion Chinese (so that they can have more than 1 child), etc., etc.--and a large proportion of people from Muslim countries who scream "Death to America."

*CBS "60 Minutes" of 19/2/06 disclosed that the world-wide deadly ruckus set off over a caricature of Mohammed in a Danish newspaper was set off by an Islamic cleric who had been welcomed as an immigrant to Denmark, and who preaches there in accented English. He wrought up Muslims elsewhere. Serves the Danes right who let hundreds of thousands of Muslims into the country in order to show how enlightened they were.

The poor "cultural editor" of the newspaper that printed the Mohammed cartoon was "left twisting in the wind" by his newspaper that suspended him. He then went to...where? To New York City, to hide there! (CBS "60 Minutes," 19/2/06).

A wonderful lesson for both the liberal Christianity-hating PC and their Christian targets is the confused complaint of Danish liberals, "but we do it to Jesus Christ too" (CBS "60 Minutes," 19/2/06).

*The 2005 end-of-the-year Time issue carried a photo of a London double-decker bus minutes after it was blown up by an Islamic terrorist earlier that year. Wounded people and corpses were still visible in the bus and on the sidewalk. On the side of the bus was a huge ad for a 4-star film. All but the first word ("The") of the name of the film was gone, but the promotion script was still visible. It said, "Outright terror...bold and brilliant." We are not aware that anyone else had commented on this "coincidence," if that is what it was.

*On 10 Aug. 2006, the NBC evening news reported on the Muslim plot to blow up many airliners at once over the Atlantic, and the announcers said with great drama that a new era in air traffic and the world had begun. This was followed by a giddy ad for an upcoming program, and an announcer asking, "And how are the stars affected?" The end of the world, and the big question for media-controlled modernists is how the celebrities are coping!

*Our newspaper has been running a weekly series of large illustrated articles of local bars, bartenders, and bar patrons. After a few months, we noted a consistent pattern: a very large number of bar patrons (at least, the ones shown in the paper) are unattached women, and the vast majority are provocatively dressed, usually displaying parts of their breast, among other things such as midriffs. Apparently, there is a very large class of such women who go to bars to catch a man, for a night or for the long run, and think that to catch one, bars are the places to be, and showing off their breasts is the way. In other ways, the articles convey the impression that these women are modernistic and shallow. We can just imagine the thinking: "I am going to a bar tonight, so where are my bar clothes?" Of course, such people have always been around, but we are struck by their large numbers.

We also see these kinds of women in news coverage of public entertainments, where there is a depressing sameness to them.

A non-modernistic heterosexual young person today must have a very hard time finding a suitable spouse.

*Surely, if ever there was a sign of the times, this is one of them: women nowadays dance while holding onto their purses, presumably because they can trust no one anymore in places where people dance. Never in our lives until recently had we seen such a thing.

*People abiding in Las Vegas have recently been spending \$25 million for so-called lap dances (Voice, Fall 03). Perhaps this is a growth industry overlooked by entrepreneurs in other locales. However, at the same time, \$63 million in child support went unpaid in Clark County, Nevada. Most likely, much of this money was being spent on lap dances.

*Native American Indians constitute less than 1% of the US population. They have some of the worst rates of poverty, unemployment, drug addiction, and poor health of all Americans. Beginning in the 1980s, many tribes began to conduct some kind of gambling operation on their lands, and while some tribes and their members have benefited financially and in improved living conditions, the vast majority of these set-ups have brought: division and even warfare within and

among tribes; fraud by many of the tribes and many of their members; loss of communality; incredible enrichment of non-Indian, and even outright criminal, parties; a worsening of already negative attitudes by non-Indians towards Indians in areas where the Indians claim or buy land for gambling; and of course, none of this has been good for the people who frequent the gambling centers (Time, 16/12/2002). (Maybe this is “pay-back time.”) There have been instances where Indian tribes have pulled themselves up out of poverty via economic and business development without relying on gambling, but these do not get the press, nor the emulation, that the get-rich-quick gambling schemes have done.

*Imagine this: the hysteroid newswoman who had a colonoscopy live on TV was hired by prestigious world-class CBS to be a major news “anchor.” Entertaining performance as news again. Will a porn actress be next?

*It is amazing how few people have commented on the fact that a former vice president (Robert Dole) of the US would lend his name and image for 5 full years to the promotion of Viagra, which of course also implies publicly that his poor wife would not have gotten any sex without it, which seems a terrible invasion of her privacy. But this is what our society has come down to. Publicizing one’s colon seems suddenly an upgrade over publicizing one’s penis.

*Again the blindness of the PC is stunning. The cover article of Newsweek of 6 March 2006 was on India, and how it will soon be one of the world’s more dominating economies. It rhapsodized about how Western values are taking hold there, that it was a real democracy, that taboos against premarital sex are falling, and that wives increasingly have affairs. But several pages away, we were told that India now has the world’s second largest HIV population. No connection was made between HIV and sexual liberation! Nor was it mentioned that an AIDS-ravaged country will hardly be able to thrive for long! Also, India seems to be going the way of Iraq, with Muslims and others starting once again to kill each other.

*One of the best news about sex, abortion and AIDS for a long time has come from several African countries, like Uganda, where abstinence education has been conducted extensively, followed by a steep decline in AIDS rates. Facts like these make the liberals virtually apoplectic (HLA Action News, Spring 2006).

*Was Scooter Libby, the Chief of Staff of Vice President Cheney, one of those who blew the cover of CIA agent Valeria Plame (and thereby possibly endanger her)? We had no position on that issue until we read that Libby had published a novel in 1996 entitled The Apprentice, in which there were sex scenes of incest and homoeroticism. **Then** we believed it.

*It is not difficult to imagine snakes getting loose on an airplane, but in 9/2006, a woman in a subsidized high-rise apartment building for the poor in Syracuse called the front desk to say that there was a snake in her 9th floor(!) apartment. A skeptical man went up to check. The woman had retreated to the middle of her bed, and sure enough, there was a snake of respectable length. The man did not bother to find out if it was somebody’s pet, and killed the poor thing. We warned before to be always on the look-out for toilet snakes.

*US Army recruiters must be desperate. They have been signing up people with known drug problems and mental disorders, including an autistic man with low IQ who spent years in special education. When the recruiter was told of the young man’s condition, he refused to reconsider (e.g., SPS, 7 May 2006).

*A new phenomenon in our area is that there is about one motorcycle accident a week, many entailing fatalities. Usually, the cyclist was doing something stupid. One 21-year-old cyclist who died was eulogized in his obituary (apparently by his parents) for dying “doing something he loved,” for never doing something that wasn’t fun, and for having “a need for speed” (SPS, 30/7/2006). That latter is a new one on us.

*We had commented in an earlier edition of TIPS that as more and more people in society become selfishly self-centered, fewer and fewer of them yield to emergency vehicles, such as

ambulances. Yet another example of this pattern occurred in Syracuse in 1/2006. The driver of the SUV told police she heard the sirens but did not know where they were coming from (SPS, 16/1/2006)--and that is precisely why one is supposed to pull over and wait, to find out where the emergency vehicle is.

*The modernistic people in the media are beginning to make the same mistake as President Reagan used to: they end up believing that what happens in media fiction (TV shows, films, etc.) is reality. E.g., a former White House social secretary who was a consultant to the ABC TV series "Commander in Chief" said that the TV series "shows that a woman can quite successfully run this country" (Time, 24/10/2006). We kid you not! Many people have said that the series was written to smooth the way of Hilary Clinton to the presidency.

*It takes a half-gallon of oil (for fuel and fertilizer) to produce 1 bushel of corn, the way our agriculture works these days, but that involves a net loss of energy because there are more calories in the oil than the corn (Smithsonian, 7/2006). And then we turn around and make corn into ethyl alcohol to save gasoline, and hence oil??? What is wrong with this picture?

*Everybody claimed that the answer to equivocal paper ballots and old-fashioned voting machines was electronic voting machines. Now it turns out that **no** such voting machine can be made 100% reliable or even secure (Newsweek, 29/5/2006). At least with traditional ballots, one could go back and check them. Now there is talk of keeping a paper back-up system for the electronic voting machines! This is a case of blind faith in, and worship of, high-tech!

*We emphasize (and document) in our teaching that people are becoming enslaved by their technology, which they nonetheless continue to worship. One other piece of evidence of what is happening is that the average person who has an internet connection will receive more than 2200 junk e-mails each year--if that were "real mail," that would mean almost 10 pieces of junk mail each delivery day (Newsweek, 26 June 2006). But we suspect that even if people were receiving 22,000 junk e-mails each year, it would not convince them that something is wrong.

*There are scientists who want to genetically cross spiders with goats so that they can recover spider silk from the goat milk (Smithsonian, 7/2002). Soon, they will try to get silk purses from sows' ears!

*When the new Denver airport opened in 1995, the new high-tech automated computerized underground baggage-handling system was trumpeted as its jewel. It turned out to be unmanageable by its software, delaying the opening of the airport by 16 months, and adding hundreds of millions of dollars to its cost--and never ever ran reliably even afterwards. In 2005, it was abandoned, and old-fashioned manual handling was instituted. This calamity contributed heavily to the bankruptcy of United Airlines.

The US Internal Revenue Service tried to modernize its data system in 1997 at a cost of \$4 billion(!) that failed, followed by an \$8 billion data project failure at the FBI, including a \$170 million case file management system that was scrapped in 2005. The Federal Aviation Administration also tried to "modernize" its air traffic control system, which has not succeeded yet.

In all these cases, the designs had been poorly thought-out (probably by nerds in their teens or twenties), and what typically happens is that when the basic flaws are discovered, then instead of starting all over, the system gets patched up again and again, introducing yet more complexities and internal contradictions (no one listens to Gödel!). It is like trying to prop up a tall building built on an unstable foundation (Scientific American, 6/2006).

*Just what our society needs. The military has developed a new noisemaker intended for "fending off insurgents, dispersing crowds, flushing out buildings, and telling people 'not to come any closer'" (Newsweek, 15 July 2004). Its developer says it has an adjustable screeching tone and is "very irritating." Expect to see it soon at domestic disturbances, and possibly at rock concerts too.

*A good example of what we call normative insanity, and absence of a rudimentary sense of realism, is the large number of Americans who have very small retirement funds and/or savings, but who nonetheless expect to retire in financial security. More than half of all working people, and even

more than 40% of workers 55 and older, have less than \$25,000 in retirement savings. They are apt to use this up in 1-2 years of retirement, even if they get social security which is always modest.

*In an earlier issue of TIPS (6/8/10/12-03 & 2/04), we reviewed the 2000 book Bowling Alone, which documents the decline of communality and volunteerism in the US. Now, we learn that there are fewer and fewer bowling centers because there are fewer bowling leagues (SPS, 14/11/05).

*It is hard to believe that almost half of the US population changed domicile during the last 5 years of the 20th century (AP in SPS, 24/9/2003). It is hardly possible to live communally if one constantly moves.

*Dwyer, J., & Flynn, K. (2006). 102 minutes: The untold story of the fight to survive inside the Twin Towers. New York: Times Books (Henry Holt & Co.). This book by two NY Times reporters tells the story of the time between the first jet flying into World Trade Center (WTC) 1, North Tower, and the collapse of that tower 102 minutes later, on Sept. 11, 2001. Its focus is on the people who got out of both towers, and how they did so, though it also tells the stories of some people who did not survive, such as those trapped on the floors above the flames who were unable to reach any elevators or stairs going down. The book also talks about the response of the fire and police departments of New York City (NYC), but not in as much detail as have some other accounts.

The book brings out that four things contributed to the large loss of life in the towers.

1. Apart from the culpability of the men who flew the planes into the buildings, the book lays much of the blame for the loss of life that day on the building's design. When the WTCs were built in the late 1960s-early 70s, the Port Authority refused to abide by the old 1938 fire code of NYC, saying it was antiquated, and had been outdated and surpassed by new building materials. The builders wanted to make the building as profitable as possible, which meant having as much space as possible available to rent, and as little as possible devoted to non-rentable functions such as stairwells and emergency exits. So the code authorities allowed the towers to be built with fewer of the safeguards than other very tall buildings, to save construction and occupancy costs.

However, fire department personnel had lobbied against the building design from the very start, arguing that it was too dangerous. One firefighter begged his son to find a job elsewhere when his son--who died there--told him he would be working in the towers. Another fireman, who had written what was considered the definitive book on building fire safety, wrote that "lives are saved when a building is designed," meaning that if safety is not built into a structure from the beginning, then no later measures can fix it.

2. The authorities assumed that the buildings could burn for hours, but either not collapse at all, or only after hours of fire. Also, the fact that the towers had survived the 1993 bombing (by a truck bomb in the basement garage) confirmed to the Port Authority that the buildings were virtually invincible, though some alterations were made. The collapse of the South Tower took everyone by surprise except the helicopter pilots, whose radioed warnings were not adequately forwarded because of the communications chaos explained below. It was this overconfidence in the buildings, and in the rescue efforts, that motivated many authorities to tell people to remain in the towers, or even to return to their offices if they had come down, seal off their spaces, and wait for rescuers, which they did in vain.

3. In the world capital of communications, there was almost total inability of rescue authorities to communicate with each other. Among other things, the NYC fire and police departments had been feuding for decades, and each put its "turf" and its own prominence above the need for cooperation. As a result, the members of the two departments had no way to communicate with each other, no coordination or plan as to which was to be in charge in what situations, or what the chain of command would be, and the fire department specifically had not installed antennae that would make its radio equipment actually usable in a situation such as occurred that day, i.e., inside a huge high-rise with much chaos. Thus, the fire department was not even able to communicate among its own units. The people staffing the 911 emergency lines had no one tell them what to tell the many callers from the towers; also, they were the lowest-paid city workers. Because of bad communications, the fact that one staircase in one of the towers was usable did not get disseminated, which cost many lives. An engineer's warning that the towers were about to collapse had to be sent to a fire chief by a foot messenger! He did not believe the message, but seconds later saw the South Tower collapse. By 2004, the lack of intercommunication had still not been fixed. Had another attack occurred, the same information chaos would have prevailed.

4. For a variety of reasons, of all the people who were saved, very few were saved by fire or police personnel. Among other things, the firemen carried so much gear that they could only ascend very slowly, and hardly any even got to the areas where fires were burning. By that time, there was no one there any longer who could have been saved. Thus, according to this book, most of those fire and police personnel who died in the collapse of the towers did so because they were simply trapped, and were not given enough warning even when it was known that the second tower was also going to fall, rather than because they heroically stayed behind to die with doomed civilians. One large group of firemen in the North Tower died because when the message to evacuate the tower came, they did not believe it.

So the vast majority of people who escaped got out on their own initiative, and with the help of friends, acquaintances and strangers. Rescue personnel were helpful almost only on the lower floors, directing people to exits or carrying them out.

The book also brings out the post-disaster cover-ups. NYC tried to keep all sorts of facts secret in order to cover up its failures, but a court order gained access to a wealth of data, and revealed the many failures and derelictions. These exposed Mayors Giuliani and Bloomberg as having lied massively about what had happened, but the spinmeisters spun so well that both ended up interpreted as heroes.

One of the remarkable things about the disaster was that people fleeing the building (mostly by the stairs, and only a few by elevator) did so in very good order, and mutual considerateness. In large part, this was because after the 1993 basement bombing of the WTCs, the Port Authority instituted regular fire drills, and had volunteer "rescue wardens" for each tenant of the building. These people learned how to handle evacuees in an emergency, where the exits were, etc. In several firms, once the planes hit, the rescue wardens assumed authority and commanded people to flee, and helped them to do so, even while the people at ground level were telling the same people to go back up the stairs and return to work.

Where the planes hit, there were many dead, dying, and unrescuable wounded. Many people were also wounded and burned in the near-by areas. Only a handful of these escaped.

Ed Beyea, age 42, who had been paralyzed in a diving accident 20 years earlier, weighed 280 pounds, used a wheelchair, and was dependent on a personal aide for virtually all his activities, including to get him bathed, dressed, to his job as a computer analyst for a health insurance company (on the 27th floor of the North Tower), and set-up at his desk and computer there. Over his 12 years of work there, he had become good friends with Abe Zelmanowitz, 55. When the plane struck, Zelmanowitz, Beyea, and his aide all went to the stairway landing. The two men sent the aide out of the building and waited together--presumably for help from rescue personnel. Several times, firefighters suggested Zelmanowitz leave, and that they would take care of Beyea, but Zelmanowitz insisted that he wanted to stay with his friend. They both died in the collapse of the tower; one fire captain remained with them, and died too. Apparently, they did not think that carrying the wheelchair or Beyea alone down the stairs was feasible or needed. According to other sources, about 100 handicapped people perished in the towers.

Ironically, a group of people were in a disaster planning meeting on the 97th floor. Not clear-headed enough to leave when the other tower was hit first, they stayed, and got trapped when the second plane hit. The TIPS editor trusts that after today, all readers would know better than these experts.

Here are some stories of dramatic rescues. Some people on the way down the tower stairs had panic attacks, and were saved by strangers who calmed them, and motivated them to continue their escape. Some of the refugees were elderly, one was 89-years-old; some had heart conditions; some had had heart surgeries; some had asthma. People helped them by carrying their coats and briefcases. One woman had suffered burns on the 88th floor, and was helped down by others. One woman used crutches to walk, maybe because of a recent injury. A man struggled to half-carry her, until a more sturdy one lifted the woman over his shoulders and carried her down 54 floors, and out into a vehicle going to a hospital. He did this even as rescuers urged him to put her down on floor 20 or 15, saying that they were out of danger. A woman in a heavy motorized wheelchair on the 68th floor was transferred into one of the hundreds of lightweight evacuation wheelchairs that had been deployed after the 1993 bombing of the towers. Two strong men picked her up and carried her down 68 flights of stairs! Different people gave them an assist on the way down, but again at floor 21, firefighters suggested she be left with them to be evacuated. She insisted that they go on, which eventually meant her carriers had to go through darkness, deep puddles of water, and find their way around blocked stairwells. They took her all the way to a waiting ambulance on the street. One 250-pound quadriplegic in an evacuation wheelchair was helped down from the 69th floor by 10 colleagues. Firefighters told them on the 21st floor to leave him there for them to handle, but they refused and went on. They told him they would never do it again unless he lost some weight. One overweight man collapsed around the 7th floor of the stairwell, unable to walk any further. Here, firefighters actually did take over, trying to carry the man down by strapping him into a chair. Eventually, this no longer worked, and he had to be dragged down the rest of the stairs by the legs. (One wonders whether any person in a wheelchair would have been saved had it not been for the help of friends and strangers, and their distrust of the authorities.) One man, blind from birth, was helped down 78 floors by his guide dog.

At least three men who died were members of the Port Authority's construction and maintenance crews for the buildings, whose jobs entailed doing and overseeing changes and remodeling in the structures. After they had seen that all the people on their floors were on the way to safety, they turned back and went up to higher floors, breaking open jammed doors onto stairwells so that people could use them, lifting furniture and masonry that had fallen on, and entrapped, other people, and so on. Without their efforts, all these people on the upper floors would not have escaped. The men themselves died in the buildings' collapse.

Flyers on Upcoming Events

Enclosed with this issue of TIPS are flyers on 3 upcoming workshops, and on the 4th international SRV conference, all to be held in late 2006 and through 2007. We thought these would be of interest to TIPS subscribers. We also encourage subscribers to copy these flyers and disseminate them to interested parties.

TIPS Editorial Policy. TIPS was begun in 1981, & comes out in six, or fewer but combined, issues per year. Combined issues of TIPS, such as a double or triple issue, contain two or three times the usual amount of copy. This allows some topics to be treated in depth, & saves on postage costs. TIPS contains articles, news, insights, reviews & viewpoints that relate to the interests & mission of the Training Institute. At the present, this mission has to do with reading "the signs of the times," & interpreting their meaning for human services. This necessitates that TIPS address some of the larger issues which affect our society & the ways in which decisions are made in it, because these higher-order phenomena will eventually express themselves in human services in various ways, including in human service values, funding & practices. Usually, each TIPS issue focuses primarily on one major theme. Examples from the past have been Crazeology; Deathmaking; Human Service News; Poverty & the Poor; Social Advocacy; Social Role Valorization; War & Peace; Crime, Punishment & Prisons; & Homelessness. TIPS addresses relevant developments whenever & wherever they occur, so disclosures of adaptive or horrific developments promoted by a particular political party or government should not be taken as partisan political statements. We assume that subscribers are people who lead hard lives struggling against great odds, & are aware of many shortcomings in human services. Thus, we try to inject levity into TIPS so as to make subscribers' lives more bearable (or less unbearable, as the case may be), even if not deliriously joyful. In fact, the "signs of the times" tend to be depressing, & thus much TIPS content is in need of levitation. TIPS tries to report developments truthfully, but since it gets many items from other sources, it cannot be responsible for errors contained in original sources. In order to save space, published sources for items are abbreviated when cited--just enough to help us recover the full citation if a reader requests it. Items that are not attributed to other sources or writers are to be considered authored by the publisher/editor of this newsletter. Anyone wishing to reproduce items from TIPS should contact the TI Training Coordinator for permission & terms.

The Training Institute. The Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency (TI), directed by Wolf Wolfensberger, PhD, is part of Syracuse University's School of Education. Dr. Wolfensberger is a research professor in that School. Since its founding in 1973, the TI has never applied for federal grants, & has been supported primarily by fees earned from speaking events & workshops across the world, & to a small extent from consultations, evaluations of services, the sale of certain publications & planning & change agency tools (see "TI Publications" below), & subscriptions to TIPS. TI training has: (a) been aimed primarily at people who are or aspire to be leaders & change agents, be they professionals, public decision-makers, members of voluntary citizen action groups, students, etc.; & (b) primarily emphasized high-level concepts & values related to formal & informal human services, the rendering of compassionate & comprehensive community services, & greater societal acceptance of impaired & devalued citizens.

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